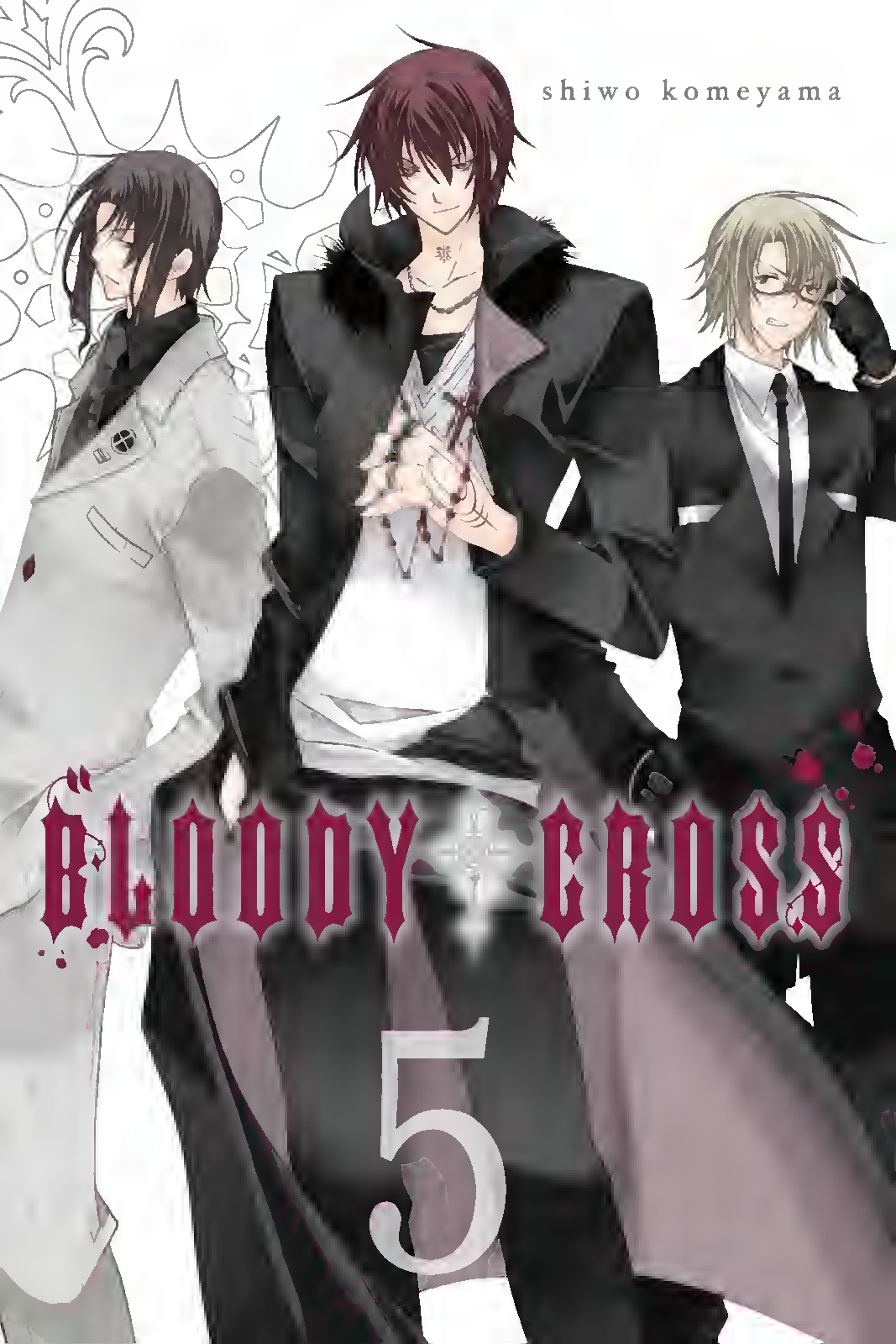
shiwo komeyama



BLOODY CROSS

5

BLOODY CROSS

5

Shiwo
Komeyama

BLOODY CROSS

05 contents

19: Spy vs. Spy 003

20: Immoral Pair 045

21: The Scapegoat 091

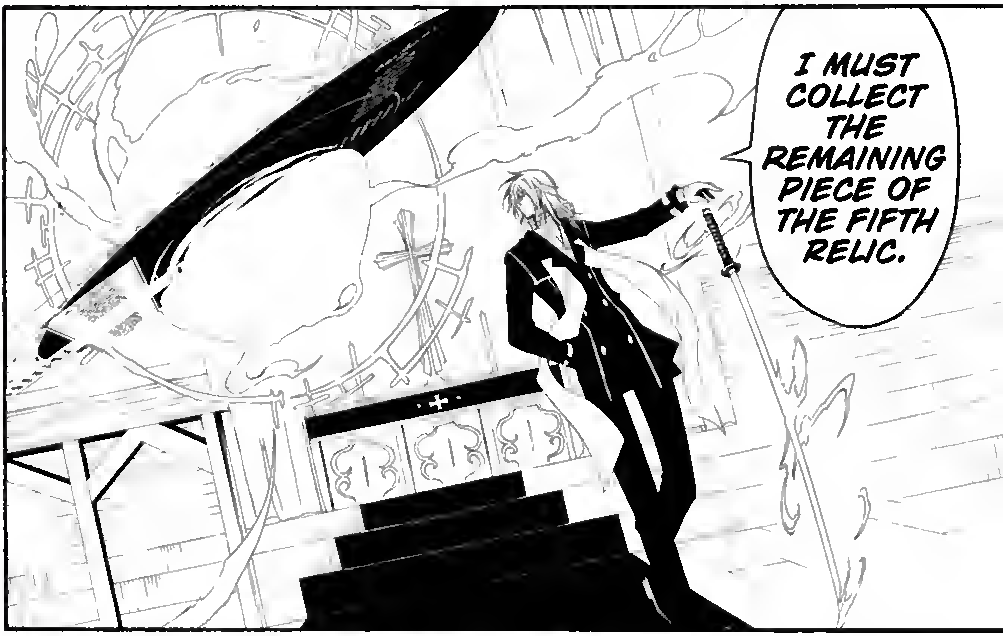
22: Judgment Time 139

23: Words of an Angel 181

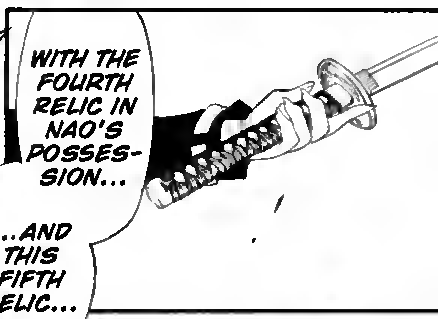
YOU DID WELL, NAO.
SENDING YOU TO JOIN TSUZUKI... HAS CERTAINLY PAID OFF.
I'LL DO MY BEST TO KEEP YOU HAPPY— THE BEST IS YET TO COME...
...Sir Pure-blood.
HEH..

NOW, THEN.
I SUPPOSE I OUGHT TO GET TO WORK TOO.

RING ME AGAIN IF ANYTHING HAPPENS.
... WELL ...
...I'M COUNTING ON YOU.


I MUST COLLECT THE REMAINING PIECE OF THE FIFTH RELIC.

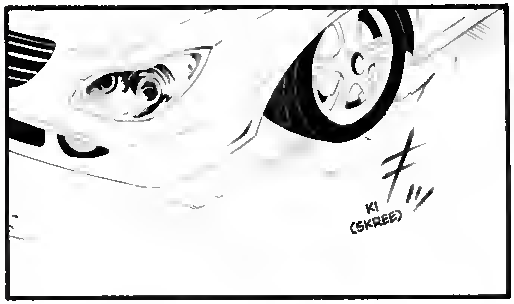
ZA CLASH!


WITH THE FOURTH RELIC IN NAO'S POSSESSION...
...AND THIS FIFTH RELIC...

Chapter 19
Spy vs. Spy

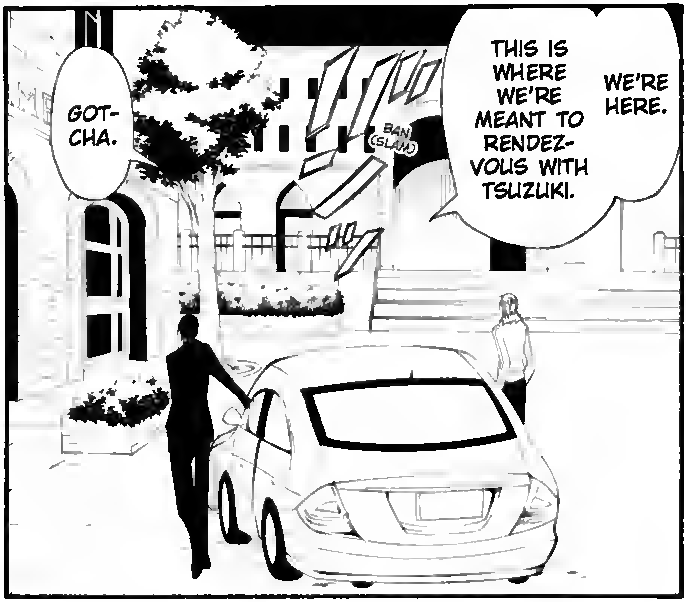
ブオ
BUO
VROOM
...THE LAST RELIC'S AURA IS NO LONGER PRESENT AT ITS MANIFESTATION POINT.
IT APPEARS ...
...THE ENEMY SNATCHED IT. JUST AS WE EXPECTED.
WELL ...
...NO ONE FROM OUR SIDE WENT TO COLLECT IT...
...SO IT'S NOT AS IF WE HAD ANY CHANCE.
IT COULDN'T BE HELPED. WITH THREE RELICS APPEARING AT THE SAME TIME, NABBING THEM ALL WOULD'VE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE.

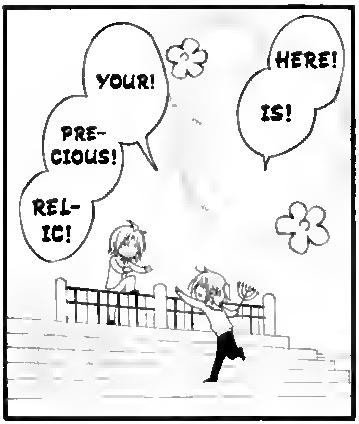
ALL WE CAN DO IS HOPE THAT SIR PUREBLOOD AND TSUKIMIYA WERE SUCCESSFUL ...
...AND SECURED THE THIRD RELIC...
...WHILE WE DEFEND THIS "CANDELA-BRA" WITH OUR LIVES.


KI (SKREE)

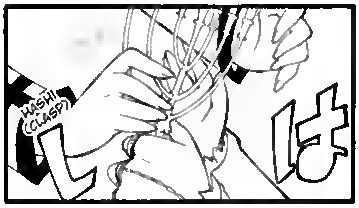
...IN-DEED.

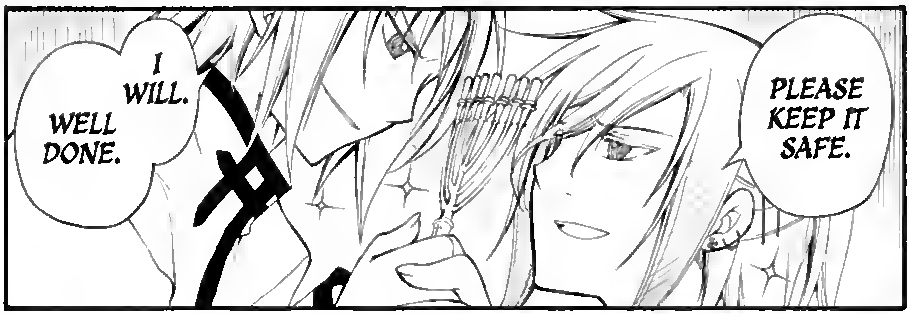
KA (TAK)
YO.
WHAT TOOK YOU TWO SO LONG?


GOT-CHA.
BAN (SLAM)
THIS IS WHERE WE'RE MEANT TO RENDEZ-VOUS WITH TSUZUKI.
WE'RE HERE.


HERE!
IS!
YOUR!
PRE-
CIOUS!
REL-
IC!

I WAS GETTING SICK OF WAITING FOR YOU!
IT'S BEEN TEN WHOLE MINUTES!
SIR PURE-BLOOD!!

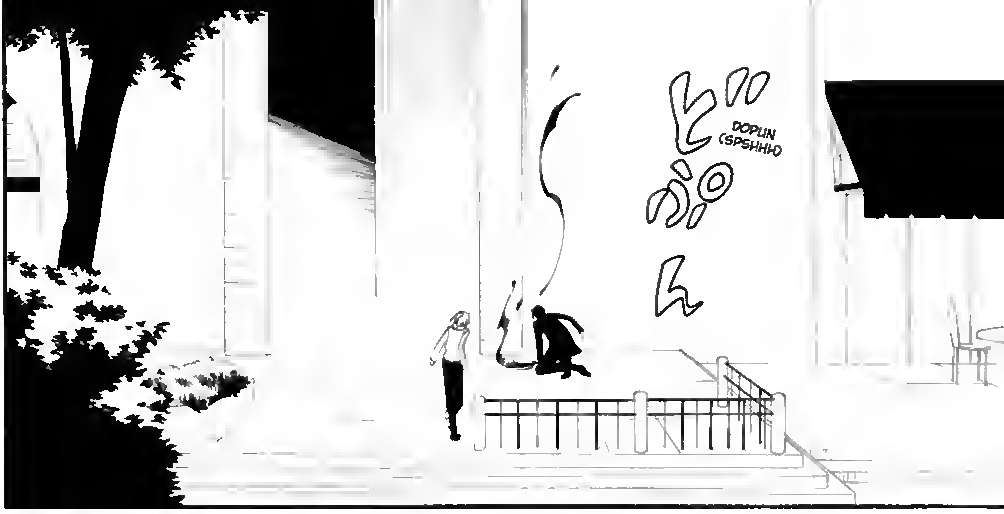

HASH! (CLASH)


PLEASE KEEP IT SAFE.
I WILL.
WELL DONE.

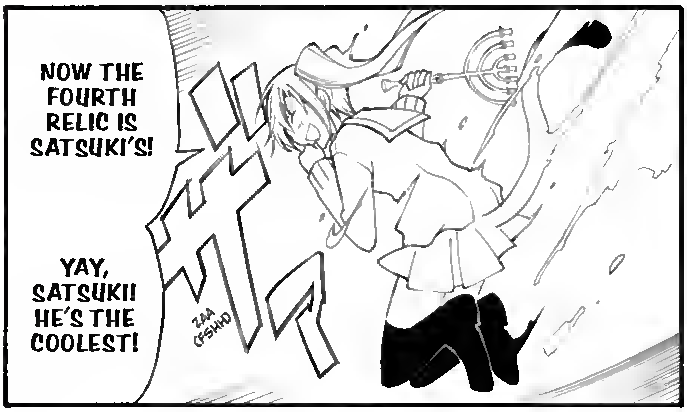
.....

...YOU'RE ALONE?
WOW, SO THIS IS THE FOURTH RELIC, HUH?
WHERE IS TSU-KIMIYA?
OH, HER?
SHE SAID SHE'D BE HERE IN A BIT WITH THE RELIC IN HAND.

DON
DON
CRLAM
WHOA!
...WATCH IT, WILL YA!?
NAO.
TAKE BACK THE CANDE-LABRA.
HUH?
I CAUGHT A WHIFF OF SOMETHING THAT'S NOT TSUZUKI FROM THAT.
...HA!
BLEH!
STU
PID
DOG
GY!
DUMMY!
TOO BAD IT'S TOO LATE!

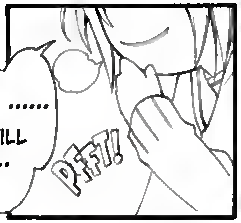

DOPLIN (SPSHHH)

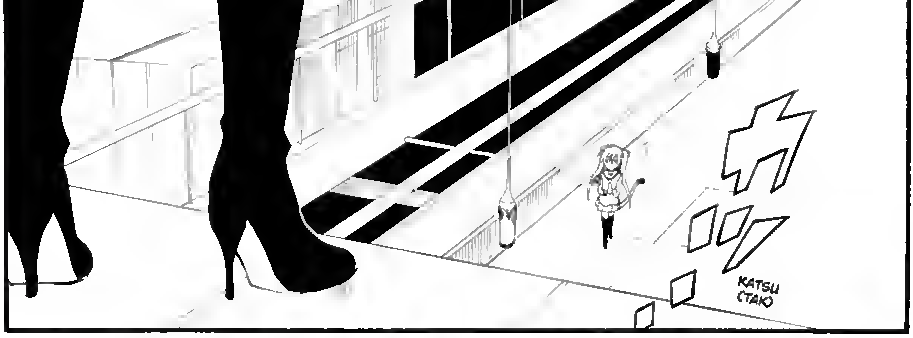
...DAM-MIT!


NOW THE FOURTH RELIC IS SATSUKI'S!
YAY, SATSUKI! HE'S THE COOLEST!
ZAA (PSHH)

AH HA HA!
PYONKO (HOP)
PYONKO
PYONKO
STUPID STUPID NYAH-NYAH!

HEE HEE!
...THAT BOY... GOING ALL OVER-THE-TOP WITH THAT "SIR PURE-BLOOD" STUFF...
HE'S SOOO LAME!


.....
STILL ...
PIT!!


KATSU (TAK)

MM?
WHO'RE YOU?

GOOD EVE-NING.

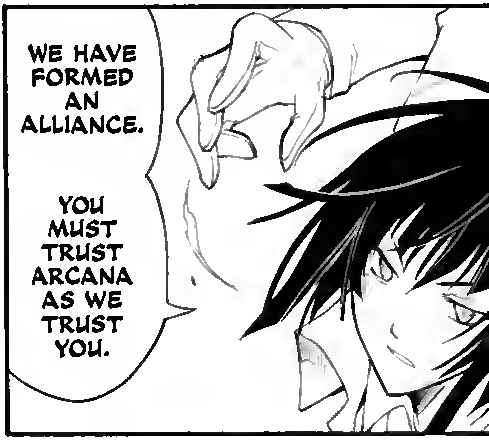
WE ARE KUKI OF ARCANA.
WE APOLO-GIZE FOR THE BOTH-ER...
...BUT SINCE THE AGREED-UPON PLAN STATES THAT WE ARE TO TAKE THE FOURTH RELIC...
...WE MUST ASK YOU TO HAND IT OVER.

GIMME A FREAKIN' BREAK!
PUNSUKA (FUME)
MOMOSE'S GIVING THIS TO SATSUKI— AND SATSUKI ONLY!

WE WILL KEEP IT SECURELY STORED AT ARCANA.
... WHA ...!?

...NO.
TO (TAP)

EEK!
BA (LUNGE)


WE HAVE FORMED AN ALLIANCE.
YOU MUST TRUST ARCANA AS WE TRUST YOU.

WAH!
DOO (WHOOSH)
PLEASE COOPERATE.
GIRI (SQUEEZE)
WE'VE ASKED NICELY. YOUR REFUSAL ONLY HURTS OUR FEELINGS.
A...
...ALLIANCE, MY TAIL!
GANGING UP ON ME LIKE—
WASHI (GRAB)
MROW!
.....THE FOURTH RELIC...

WE SWEAR WE WILL TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT.
D...
...DAMN ARCANA ...!!

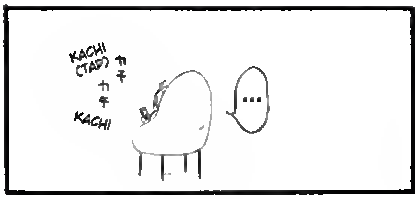
HEYA, Y'ALL!
ACQUIRING TWO RELICS RIGHT OFF THE BAT IS QUITE AN AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING!!

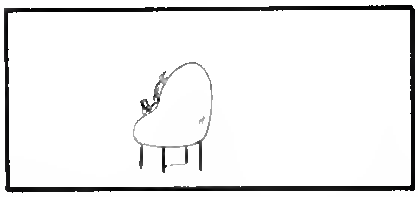
...HUH?
"STAB"?

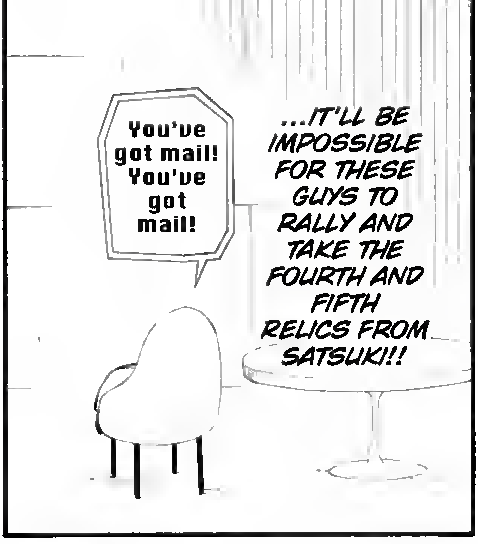
ACTUALLY, THE CAT JUST STOLE IT.
P-PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
HUH? WHAT?
DID YOU HIDE IT SOMEWHERE?
ZLULLIN (GLOOM)
WHERE?

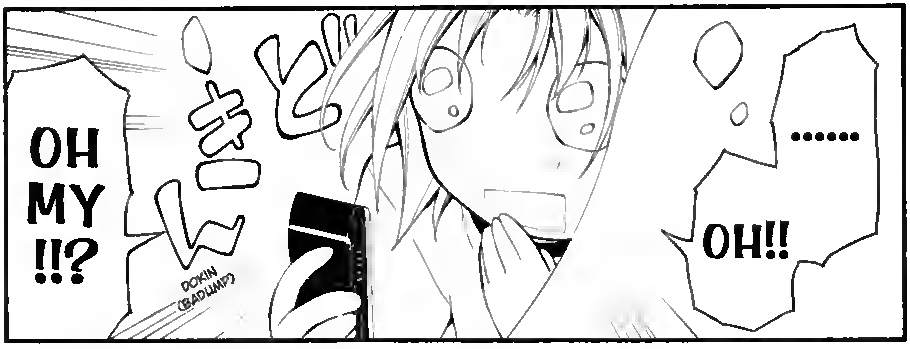
UGH!
RELIC
GUSA (STAB)
...TO ME, THE VICTOR!
ALL RIGHT, NAO, HAND OVER THAT RELIC...

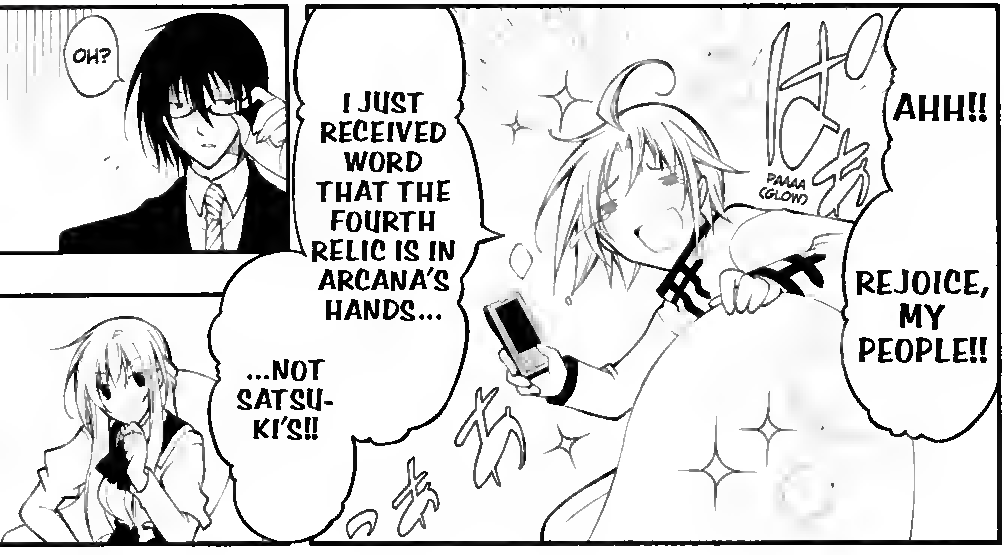
BAD TPO, HANAMURA— BAD TIME, PLACE, AND OCCASION!
YOU'RE YANKING MY CHAIN AGAIN, AREN'T YA?
P'SHAW.
HOW WOULD THAT CAT KNOW WHERE WE WERE MEETING UP?
AW, C'MON... QUIT JOKING AROUND.
... EH?
.....
...NO WAY...
.....
...COMPLETELY SERIOUS?
ARE YOU ...
... HUH?
CHIIN (DOOM)
WHA ...?
...MAKES OUR SLIM CHANCE OF VICTORY A LOT SLIMMER.
THIS NEWS ...
I'M ABOUT TO POP A VESSEL...
ZUZUN (GLOOM)
...I MEAN, SATSUKI ...
AND TO THAT CAT, NO LESS ...
WITH SUCH A PITIFUL OFFENSIVE FORCE...
SATSUKI'S BOUND TO WIN NOW.
...THIS IS PERFECT.
HOW CAN WE GET IT BACK FROM THAT FALLEN ANGEL...?


KACHI (TAP)
KACHI
...

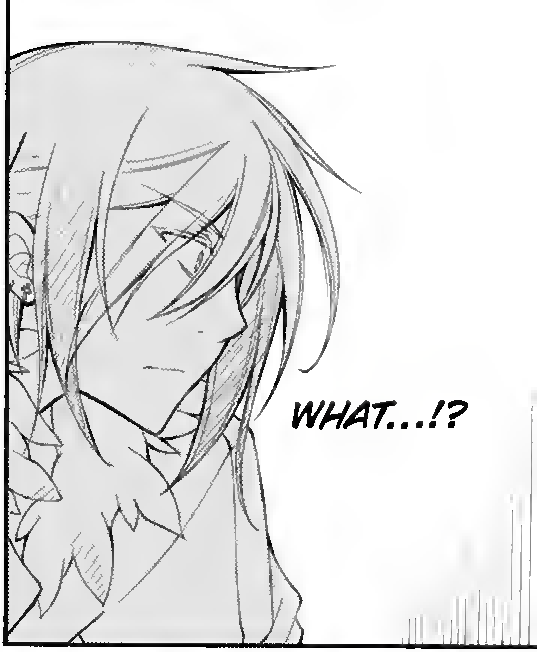


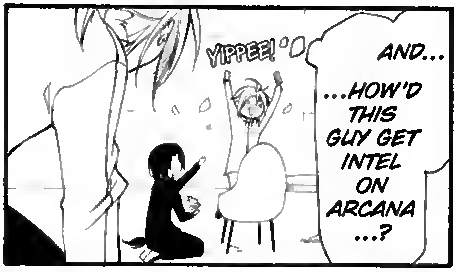

You've got mail! You've got mail!
...IT'LL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THESE GUYS TO RALLY AND TAKE THE FOURTH AND FIFTH RELICS FROM SATSUKI!!


OH MY !!?
DOKIN (BADUMP)
.....
OH!!


OH?
I JUST RECEIVED WORD THAT THE FOURTH RELIC IS IN ARCANA'S HANDS...
...NOT SATSU-KI'S!!
AHH!!
PAAAA (GLOW)
REJOICE, MY PEOPLE!!

WHY IS THE RELIC THAT SATSUKI'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE...
...IN ARCANA'S HANDS!?
WHA ...?
WOO-HOO! SERVES YOU RIGHT, SATSUKI, YA BASTARD!


WHAT...!?

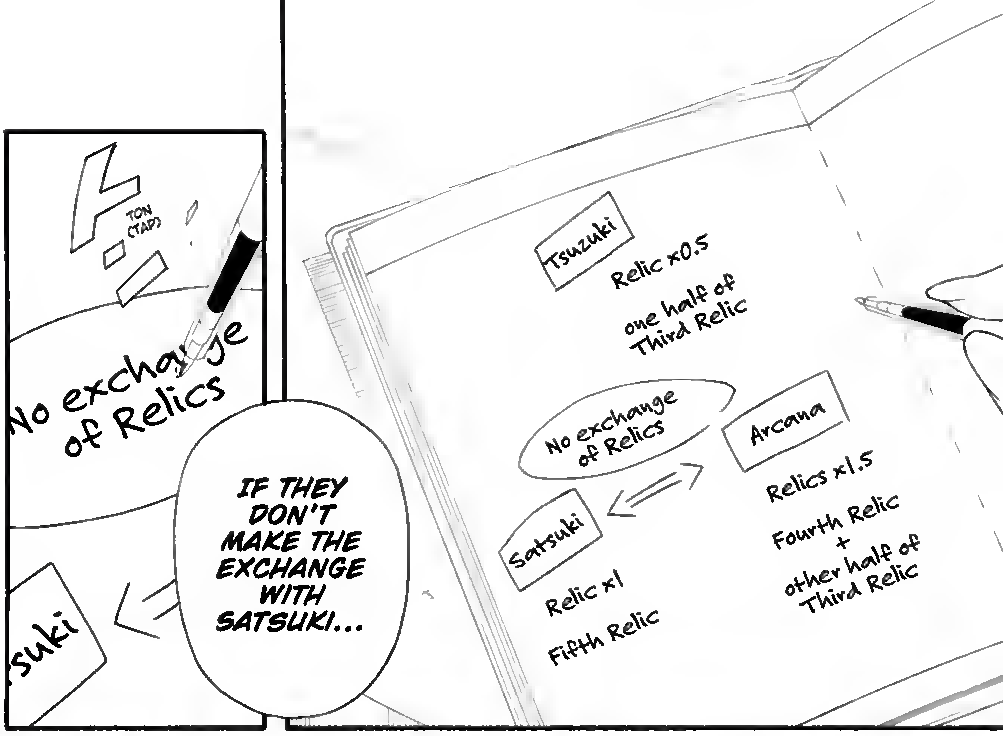

YIPPEE!
AND...
...HOW'D THIS GUY GET INTEL ON ARCANA ...?

...HINATA.

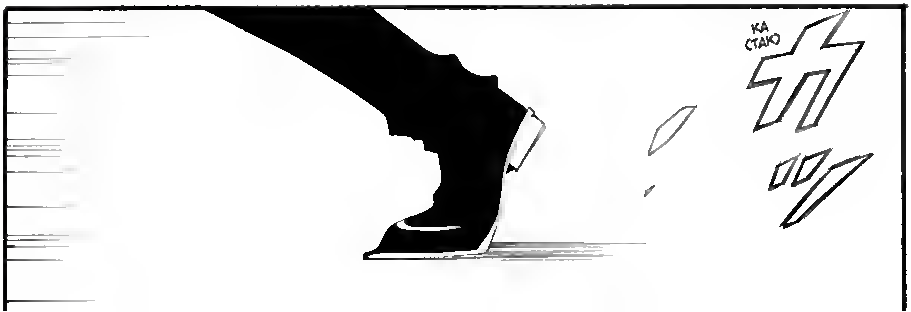
...FOOL. I THOUGHT MUM WAS THE WORD.
HE'S ALL BUT ANNOUNCED THERE'S A MOLE WITHIN ARCANA.
YA!

THEY'LL COME UP WITH ANY EXCUSE THEY CAN THINK OF TO HANG ON TO THE RELICS THEMSELVES
I STOPPED THE BLEEDING.
FU (FF)
MY SHIRT'S FIXED TOO
ARCANA HAS THEIR OWN ASPIRATIONS, SO THEY WON'T GIVE SATSUKI ANY RELICS.
HINATA'S THE SPY WHO INFILTRATED ARCANA SOME TIME AGO ON THE PUREBLOOD'S ORDERS.

AFTER ALL, SHOWING UP EMPTY-HANDED...
...WOULD AMOUNT TO SUICIDE FOR A SPY.
BUT I'LL MAKE SURE I HAVE ACCESS TO IT AND CAN RETRIEVE IT AT ANY POINT.
KACHA : CKACHAK
AS WE ORIGINALLY DISCUSSED...
...I'LL TAKE THIS PART OF THE THIRD RELIC BACK TO ARCANA.
OH. AND... I'LL GIVE YOU MY OTHER CELL NUMBER JUST TO BE SAFE.
YOU HAVE TWO OF THEM?
IN CASE I'M UNABLE TO USE ONE OR THE OTHER.
BUT DON'T CALL ME, OKAY? DON'T WANT TO BE FOUND OUT.
OH AH. YEAH. ALSO...
ARCANA ORDERED ME TO KILL YOU, BUT THAT SEEMS LIKE A REAL PAIN.
... ABOUT YOU...
IS IT ALL RIGHT IF WE PRETEND YOU'RE DEAD?
KARI (SKRITCH) KARI
ARCA-NA... HUH.
KARI
of Third Relic


TON (TAP)
No exchange of Relics
IF THEY DON'T MAKE THE EXCHANGE WITH SATSUKI...
Tsuzuki
Relic x0.5
one half of Third Relic
No exchange of Relics
Arcana
Relics x1.5
Fourth Relic + other half of Third Relic
Satsuki
Relic x1
Fifth Relic

...THEIR "COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIP" IS NOTHING MORE THAN...LIP SERVICE.
...IT MEANS ...


KA (TAK)

DON (SHOVE)
MOVE.
PLEASE, CALM YOUR-SELF!
KA
KA
WAIT ...
YOU!
...!
HEY!
BAN (SLAM)

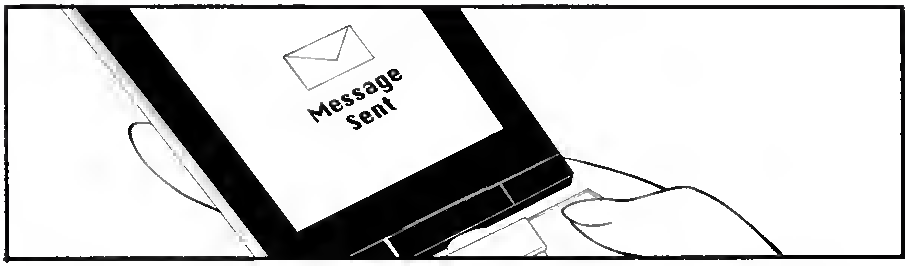
IT'S RARE FOR YOU TO COME HERE YOURSELF.
...OH?
I'LL HANG ON TO THE FOURTH RELIC.
RETURN IT TO ME.
I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR AN APOLOGY.
I APOLOGIZE FOR THEIR BOORISHNESS.
I UNDERSTAND ...
...MY SUBORDINATES SEIZED THE YOUNG LADY'S RELIC FROM HER BY FORCE.
...SO THAT TSUZUKI DOESN'T STEAL THEM.
...ARCANA SHALL KEEP THE RELICS SECURE UNTIL THE CRSADES' END...
NO. BUT DON'T WORRY...

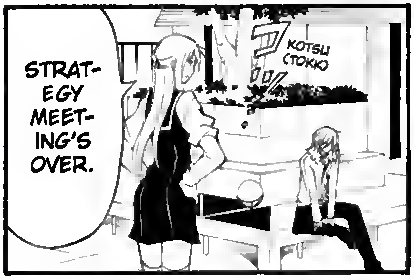
...FOCUS ON TAKING THE OTHER HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC FROM TSUZUKI.
YOU...
THEN ALL OF THIS ROUND'S RELICS WILL BE OURS.
WE'RE PARTNERS, SO WE WILL PROVIDE FULL BACKUP, OF COURSE.
IF YOU'D LIKE...
...WE CAN GUARD THE FIFTH RELIC TOO.
...YOU MUST BE JOK-ING.
...
PER-HAPS ...
YET...
...IF YOU CONSIDER THAT, IN ADDITION TO THE FOURTH RELIC...
...WE ALSO HAVE THE HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC THAT HINATA RETRIEVED...

...WHILE YOU CURRENTLY HOLD ONLY ONE, THE FIFTH RELIC...
...ARCANA MAY IN FACT HAVE THE GREATER CHANCE AT VICTORY.
YOU'RE NOBODIES THAT COULDN'T EVEN PARTICIPATE IN THE CRUSADES WITHOUT ME.
I'D MIND MY TONGUE IF I WERE YOU.
—...
NIKO (SMILE)
THOUGH IF YOU WON'T MAKE A MOVE...
...WE'LL JUST GO COLLECT THE REST OF THE RELICS.

...WELL...
...THAT'S ALL THE BETTER FOR ME.
...LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE NOT PLAYING NICE WITH SATSUKI ANY-MORE...
...OR GIVING HIM ANY RELICS.
Sub Urgent
They've been getting funny intel over here. Somehow they found out the Fourth Relic is with Arcana and not you.
.....!
HERE.
SA-TSU-KI!
YOU GOT A MES-SAGE, SATSU-KI.
HA...
WELL, WELL.
DESPITE YOUR BOASTS, YOU SEEM TO BE A BIT LAX IN YOUR SECURITY...
...IZUMI.

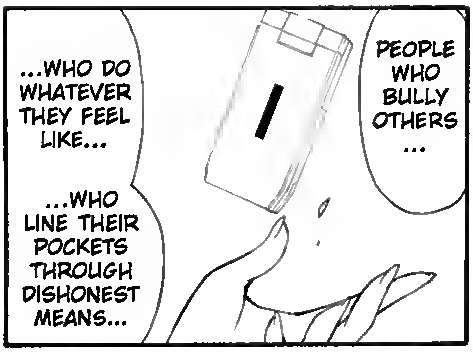
IT SEEMS INFORMATION RELATING TO OUR PROGRESS...
...IS BEING LEAKED TO THE ENEMY.
HOW CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT?
HUH!?


Message Sent


STRAT-EGY MEET-ING'S OVER.
KOTSU STOKKO

THEY TOLD US...
...TO MEET THEM AT THE CAR.

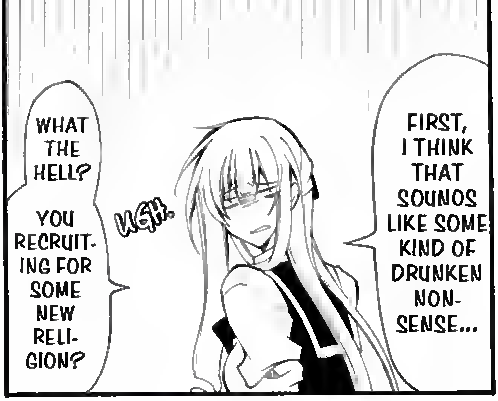
...I...
...HATE BAD GUYS, Y'KNOW.

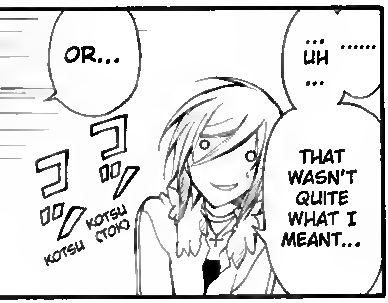

PEOPLE WHO BULLY OTHERS...
...WHO DO WHATEVER THEY FEEL LIKE...
...WHO LINE THEIR POCKETS THROUGH DISHONEST MEANS...

THIEVES. MURDERERS...
SWINDLERS, TERRORISTS...

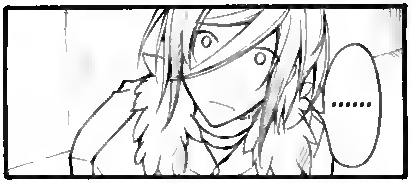
THAT'S WHY I FUNDAMENTALLY HATE ENEMIES.
I THINK THEY ALL OUGHTA DISAPPEAR.
PASHI
BUT I BET FROM MY ENEMY'S PERSPECTIVE...
...I'M THE BAD GUY INSTEAD.

DO YOU THINK I'M...
...A GOOD GUY?
OR A BAD GUY?


WHAT THE HELL?
YOU RECRUITING FOR SOME NEW RELIGION?
UGH.
FIRST, I THINK THAT SOUNDS LIKE SOME KIND OF DRUNKEN NONSENSE...


OR...
KOTSU
KOTSU
KOTSU
KOTSU
... .
THAT WASN'T QUITE WHAT I MEANT...

WE ALL HAVE BOTH GOOD AND BAD SIDES, RIGHT?
YOU'RE HUMAN.
OF COURSE YOU COULD BE SEEN AS EITHER.


.....

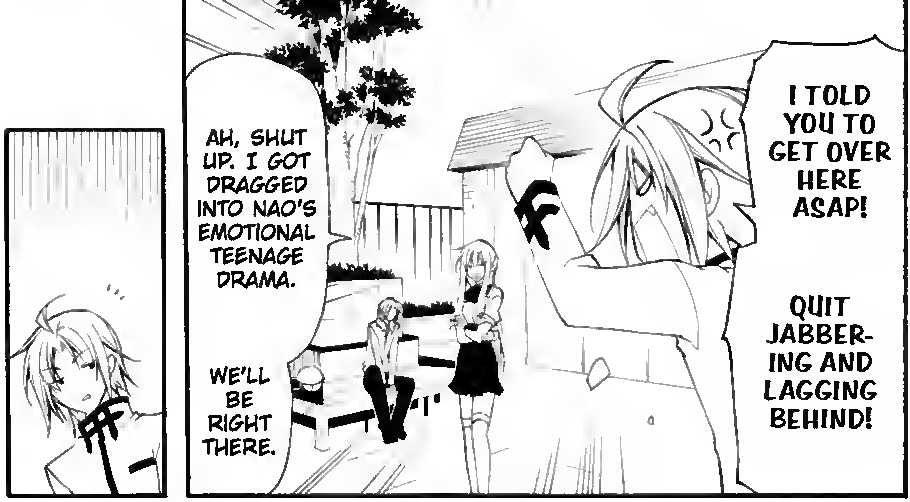
... JUST KIDDING.

...INSTEAD OF TRYING TO FIND OUT HOW SOMEONE FEELS ABOUT YOU, JUST SAY, "I WANT YOU TO SEE ME THIS WAY." IT'S MORE EXPEDIENT.
YOU KNOW...

TON CHAMO
IS THAT IT?
...YOU'RE MY ENEMY AND ARE TRYING TO DECIDE WHETHER TO KILL ME OR NOT...
...I COULD INTERPRET YOUR WORDS TO MEAN...

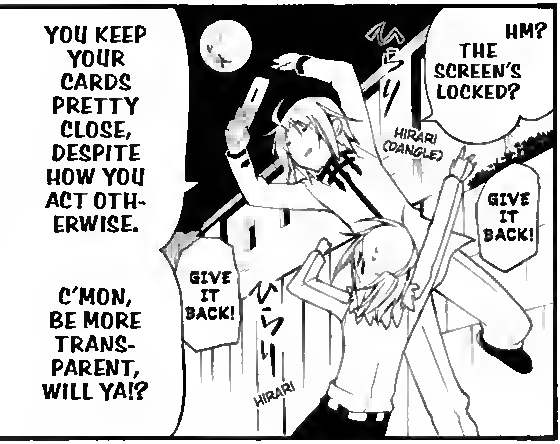
...BESIDES...
...DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF YOU?
ULTIMATELY, I THINK IT'S MORE IMPORTANT...
...TO BE "HOW YOU WANT TO BE," NOT HOW OTHERS SEE YOU.
SO?
DO YOU WANT TO BE A GOOD GUY? OR A BAD GUY?

HEY THERE, YOU TWO!!
I THINK IT'S FINE FOR A JERK TO FUND-RAISE OR A SAINT TO GAMBLE.
...THOUGH IF YOU ASK ME, IT'S STUPID TO BE TOO MUCH OF EITHER.

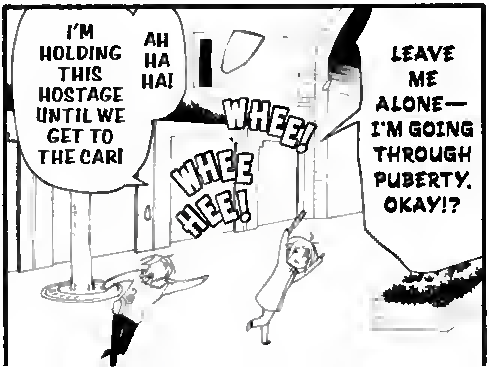

I TOLD YOU TO GET OVER HERE ASAP!
QUIT JABBERING AND LAGGING BEHIND!
AH, SHUT UP. I GOT DRAGGED INTO NAO'S EMOTIONAL TEENAGE DRAMA.
WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE.

AAAAH!!
HEY!
LET'S SEE...
POCH! POCH! POCH!

OH?
HIYOI CYOINKO
NICE CELL YOU'VE GOT!
EH?

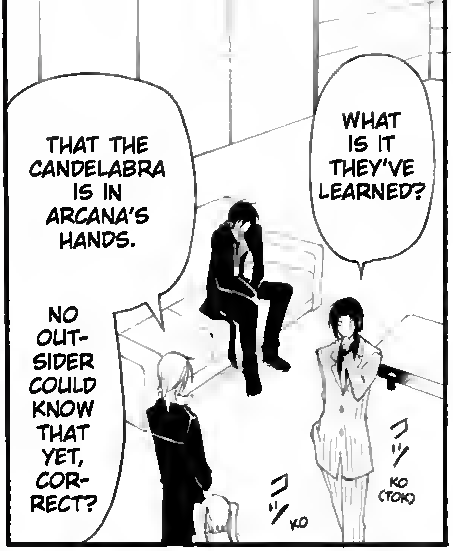

YOU KEEP YOUR CARDS PRETTY CLOSE, DESPITE HOW YOU ACT OTHERWISE.
C'MON, BE MORE TRANSPARENT, WILL YA!?
HM? THE SCREEN'S LOCKED?
HIRARI (CANGLE)
GIVE IT BACK!
GIVE IT BACK!
HIRARI

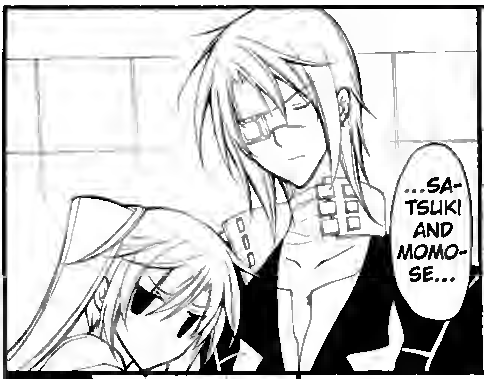
.....
NOOOOOOO!
GIVE IT BAAAACK!
NOOOOOOO!
...I'M SURROUNDED BY IDIOTS.


I'M HOLDING THIS HOSTAGE UNTIL WE GET TO THE CAR!
AH HA HA!
WHEE!
WHEE HEE!
LEAVE ME ALONE— I'M GOING THROUGH PUBERTY, OKAY!?

—WE HAVE AN INFOR-MATION LEAK.
WHICH MEANS...
.....
...THERE'S A TRAITOR AMONG US...?

...THE ONLY ONES ON THE INSIDE WHO DO KNOW ARE...
INDEED. AND...


WHAT IS IT THEY'VE LEARNED?
THAT THE CANDELABRA IS IN ARCANA'S HANDS.
NO OUTSIDER COULD KNOW THAT YET, CORRECT?
KO (TOK)
KO


...SATSUKI AND MOMOSE...

...ME ...

...HINATA ...
...MAKINO-KUN...
...AND FOUR OF THE KUKI.
...THAT MAKES NINE.

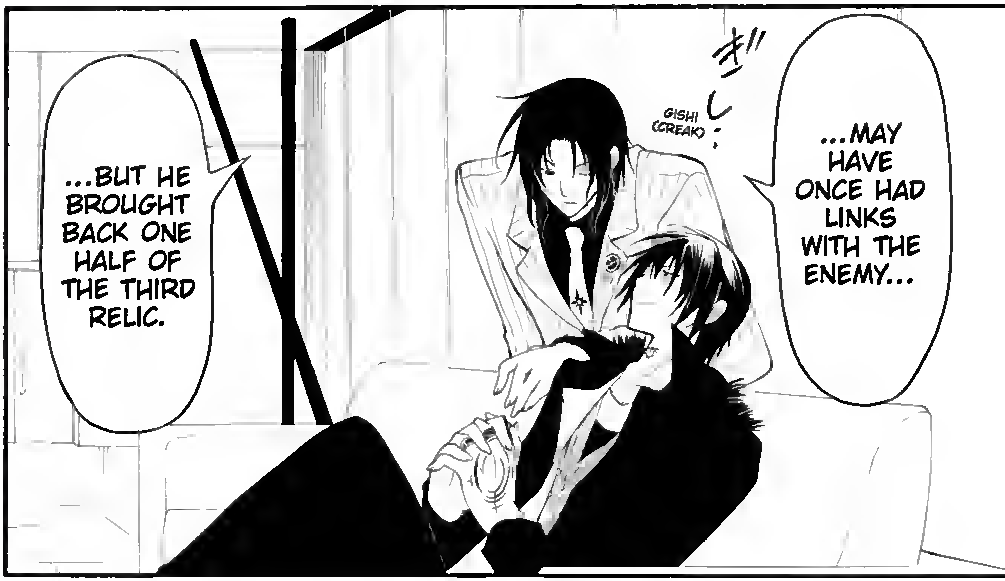
I GAIN NOTHING BY SHARING INFORMATION WITH THE ENEMY.
QUITE THE OPPOSITE, IN FACT.
THAT'S TRUE FOR ME AS WELL.
WHY WOULD I WANT TO SHOW MY HAND TO OUR ENEMIES?
!
WHICH MEANS ...
...THERE'S A BOUGHT MAN AMONG THE RABBLE OVER THERE.
.....DAMN, YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT? HOW'D THE LEAK GET LEAKED?

...IS THERE A SPY LIKE ME ON THE OTHER SIDE TOO?
OR...
IS ONE OF SATSUKI'S UNDERLINGS WATCHING TSUZUKI?
IT'D BE BAD IF IT'S TSUKIMIYA BECAUSE SHE KNOWS I'M SPYING ON ARCANA.
IT'D HAVE TO BE HANAMURA, TSUKIMIYA, OR NAO...
KO (TOK)
KO
WELL, EITHER WAY, I GOTTA WARN TSUZUKI...
SO WHO'S OUR RAT?
.....THEN AGAIN, IF IT WERE TSUKIMIYA, SHE WOULD'VE TOLD THEM I'M THE MOLE.
...WE CAN ASK ALL WE LIKE, BUT UNFORTU-NATELY...
KO
...WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE POINTING DIRECTLY TO ANYONE.

KUKI...
...MAY HAVE RETURNED WITH THE FOURTH RELIC...
...BUT THEY LET TWO OF TSUZUKI'S PAWNS GET AWAY.

HINATA...

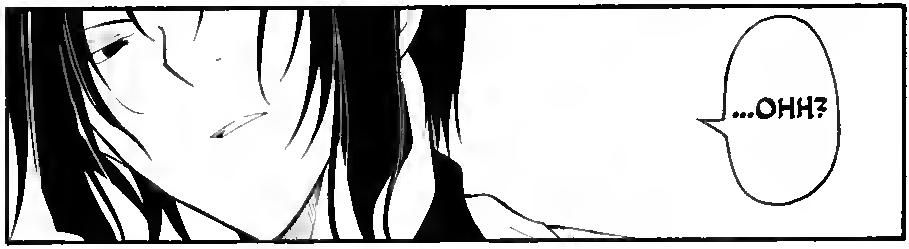
UNH...
MAKINO-KUN SQUARED OFF AGAINST TSUZUKI AND WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN THE THIRD RELIC.


...BUT HE BROUGHT BACK ONE HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC.
GISHI (CREAK)
...MAY HAVE ONCE HAD LINKS WITH THE ENEMY...

I'M SAFE... I ARRANGED THINGS SO I WOULDN'T BE FOUND OUT.
'COURSE THE RELIC WOULDN'T BE HERE WITH ME OTHER WISE.
DID YOU KILL TSUKIMIYA?
...IS ALIVE AND WELL.
THAT'S FUNNY.
ACCORDING TO MY SOURCE ... ... THAT WENCH ...
!
... WHAT THE HELL?
...SO SHE DIDN'T BITE IT? WHAT A PERSISTENT WITCH.
THAT'S RIGHT... IF SATSUKI'S SPY IS CLOSE TO TSUZUKI, HE OR SHE WOULD KNOW THAT TSUKIMIYA'S STILL ALIVE...
.....TCH.

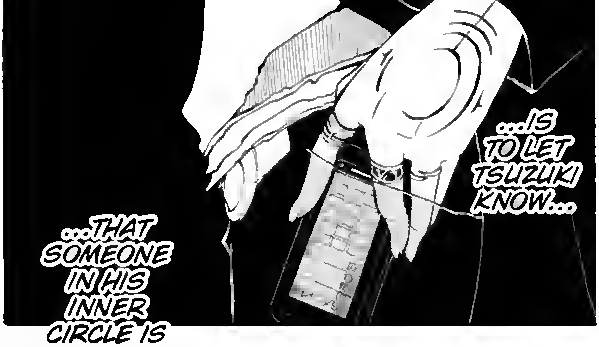
...AND MAYBE WE CAN GET HER TO FEED ENEMY INTEL TO ARCANA.
...YEAH...
...AND I CAN USE IT TO SHAKE HER DOWN...

BUT...
...IF SHE AIN'T DEAD, THEN THE SPELL THAT'LL KILL HER IS STILL ACTIVE TOO.


...OHH?

...FINE.
LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE MORE INFORMATION.
...BY THE WAY, MAY I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
...ROGER.
HOW IS IT THE BRANDED WENCH THAT I SPECIFICALLY SAID NOT TO KILL...
...HAS ENDED UP ON A HIT LIST?
.....

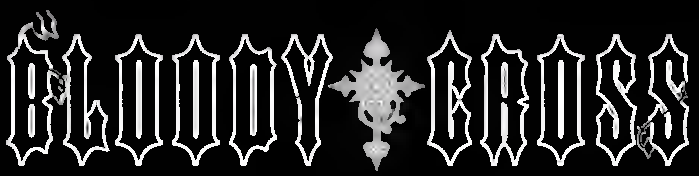
IF YOU SEE ANYONE BEHAVING SUSPICIOUSLY, SPEAK UP.
KATSU (TAK)
KATSU
IT WILL ONLY SERVE TO ESTABLISH YOUR OWN INNOCENCE.
JUST IN CASE, PLEASE TURN OVER ALL PHONES AND OTHER COMM EQUIPMENT.
FROM NOW ON YOU'LL USE DEVICES THAT AUTOMATICALLY FORWARD YOUR CONVERSATIONS TO ME.
AND TSUZUKI WOULD NEVER CALL ME EITHER.
IT'S SET SO THERE'S NO RECORD OF MY COMMUNICATIONS WITH TSUZUKI.
GOTO (CLUNK)
I CAN RIDE THIS OUT.
I'M SAFE. NO PROBLEM.


...IS TO LET TSUZUKI KNOW...
...THAT SOMEONE IN HIS INNER CIRCLE IS REPORTING TO SATSUKI—

KACHA (CHAKO
ALL THAT'S LEFT...

GU (GRAB)

BA
(FWD)
...WHAT WERE YOU DOING ON THIS CELL PHONE JUST NOW...
OR RATH-ER...
...WHAT ARE YOU UP TO OVER HERE?
...HINA-TA?
.....SHOOT...!


BLOODY CROSS

BLOODY CROSS

WHAT...
...WERE YOU DOING ON THIS CELL PHONE JUST NOW...
...HI-NATA?

Chapter 20
Immoral Pair

Chapter 20
Immoral Pair

BLOODY CROSS

...
WHA
...?

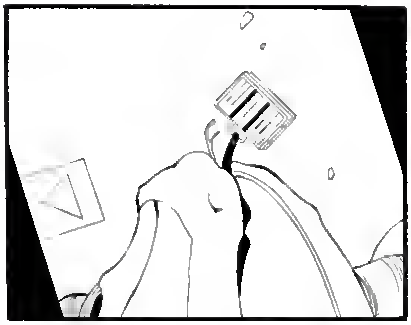
...SO I WAS TRYING TO FISH IT OUT...
...I FIGURED I OUGHTA HAND IN MY BACKUP CELL TOO...
LOOK ...
WE WERE JUST DISCUSSING A MOLE WHO'S LEAKING INFORMATION...
...TO THE ENEMY.

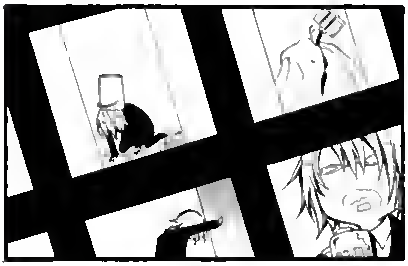
WHAT ...?
C'MON, MAKINO-KUN. CUT IT OUT WITH THE SCARY FACE.

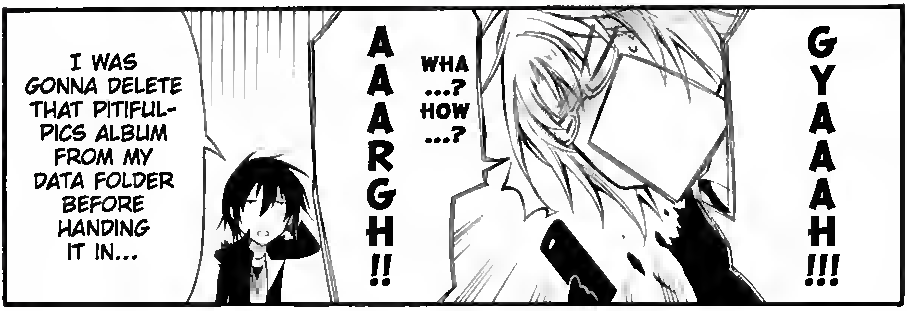
IS IT YOU?

BA (SNATCH)

ZA (ISH)
... HEY!
DON'T RESIST.
I'LL JUST CHECK ...
...AND SEE IF YOU'RE A TRAITOR OR NOT.
GIRI (GRIT)
NOW, WHAT COULD YOU HAVE BEEN WRITING...?
IT WOULD BE SO GRATIFING, NOT TO MENTION CONVENIENT, IF IT WERE AN EMAIL TO TSUZUKI.
WHO COULD THE TRAITOROUS RAT BE?
IS IT YOU?
TON (TAP)
LET'S HAVE A LOOK, SHALL WE?

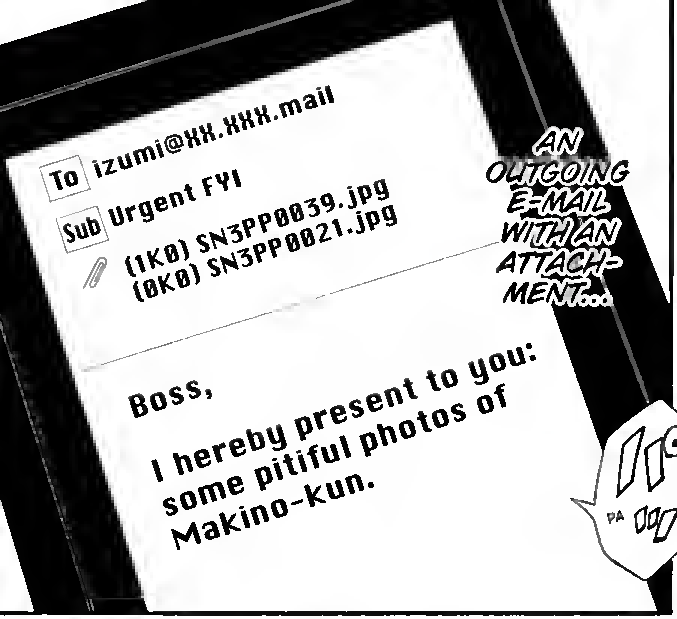





I WAS GONNA DELETE THAT PITIFUL-PICS ALBUM FROM MY DATA FOLDER BEFORE HANDING IT IN...
AAARGH!!
WHA ...? HOW ...?
GYAAAH!!!

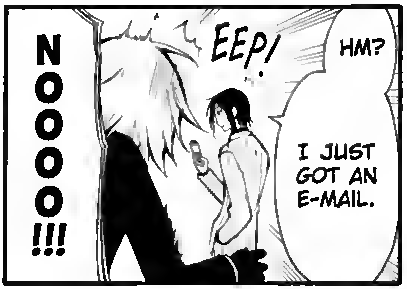
...THERE OUGHT TO BE A LOG OF HIS MESSAGE TO TSUZUKI.
—THAT'S RIGHT...! IF HE WAS MAKING CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY JUST NOW...
POCHI (TAP)
ポチ

...OH!


To izumi@XX.XXX.mail
Sub Urgent FYI
(1K0) SN3PP0039.jpg
(0K0) SN3PP0021.jpg
Boss,
I hereby present to you: some pitiful photos of Makino-kun.
AN OUTGOING E-MAIL WITH AN ATTACH-MENT...
PA

!
THERE! FOUND HIS OUTBOX!
0/500
Urgent FYI
RO2
Makino-kun
Re: Earlier

I BEG OF YOU, PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT OPEN IT...!
BUT— ?
GROVEL.
PLEASE, DELETE THAT E-MAIL WITH-OUT OPEN-ING IT.

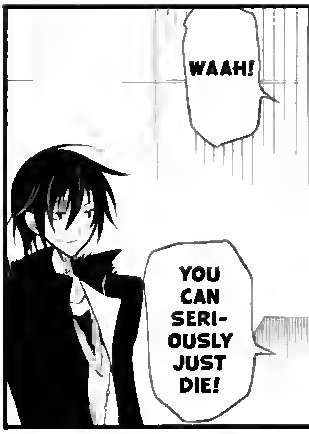

NOOOO!!!
EEP!
HM?
I JUST GOT AN E-MAIL.

...HOW IDIOTIC.
YOU'RE DIS-GUST-ING!!
URAAGH
LOSER! I BET YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS !!
STU-PID!

LOOK... I GOTTA PLAY THE LONG GAME HERE IF I WANT TO SURVIVE.
WELL, I MEAN ...
GA (GRAB)
AND YOU...! YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T FORWARD THOSE PHOTOS!

...VER-SUS YOU.
I FIGURED IT'D BE BETTER TO KISS UP TO THE BOSS...

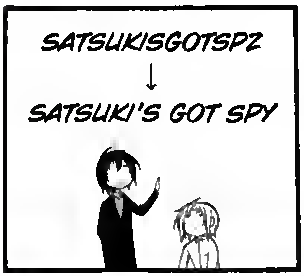
I GOTTA DO SOMETHING SOON...MY LUCK AIN'T GONNA LAST.
THAT WAS CLOSE.

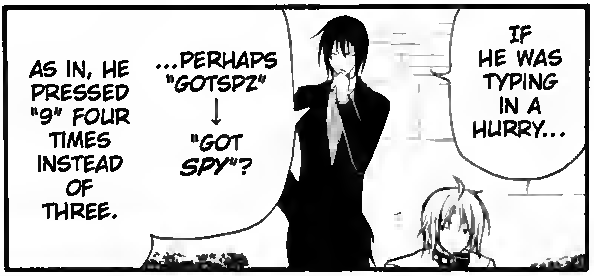

WAAH!
YOU CAN SERI-OUSLY JUST DIE!

WHAT THE HECK DOES IT MEAN?
"SATSU-KISGO-TSPZ."

To Hinata
Sub (no subject)
Satsukisgotspz
...HMM...

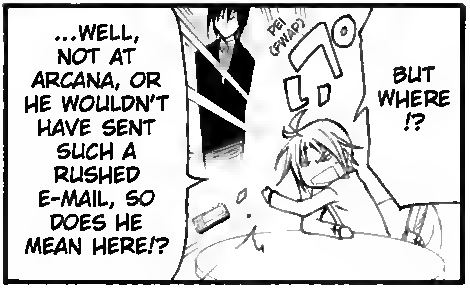
SATSUKI
SGOTSPZ
HE'S A SPAZZ?
HE ROBBED SOME SPAS?
GOT SPAS?
SGOTSPZ? GOTSPZ?

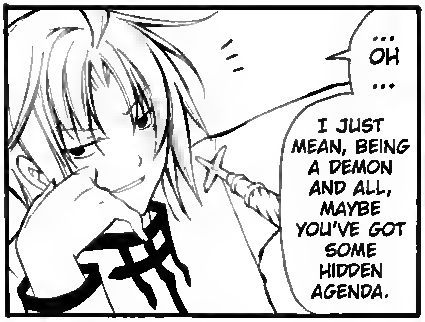

SATSUKISGOTSPZ
↓
SATSUKI'S GOT SPY


AS IN, HE PRESSED "9" FOUR TIMES INSTEAD OF THREE.
...PERHAPS "GOTSPZ" ↓ "GOT SPY"?
IF HE WAS TYPING IN A HURRY...

"SATSUKI'S GOT A SPY."
AH...

HMM... A SPY? A SPY, HUH...
THE MOST OBVIOUS CULPRIT WOULD BE ONE OF MY THREE MINIONS... BUT...
MMM...


...WELL, NOT AT ARCANA, OR HE WOULDN'T HAVE SENT SUCH A RUSHED E-MAIL, SO DOES HE MEAN HERE!?
PFFT (FRIAR)
BUT WHERE!?


...OH...
I JUST MEAN, BEING A DEMON AND ALL, MAYBE YOU'VE GOT SOME HIDDEN AGENDA.

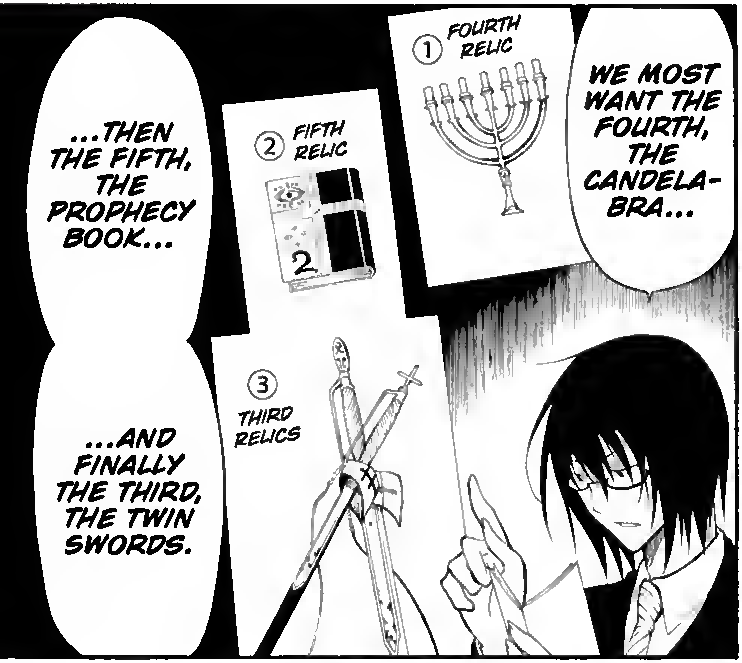
HANA-MURA.
ARE YOU A SPY?

...HEH.

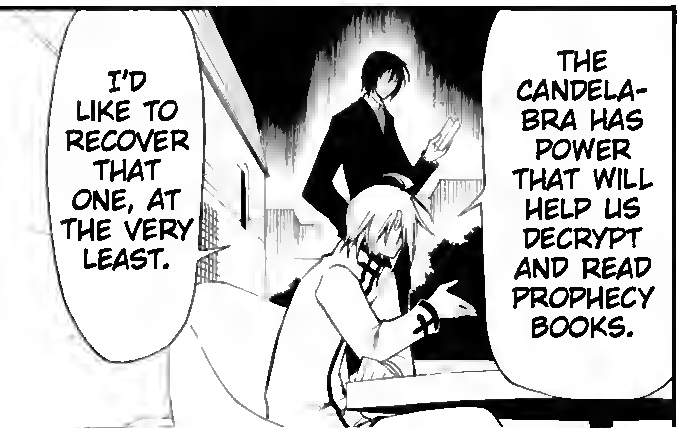
GA (GRAB)

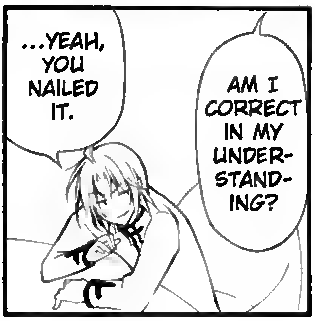
DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER REASON TO SUSPECT ME?
GUGU
GU
...OW! I'M SORRY, OKAY? THAT HURTS!
GU
GUGU (PRESS)
...OW!
IF I WERE A SPY...
...I'D HAVE GROUND THIS SKULL TO A PULP AND STOLEN THE RELICS LONG AGO.

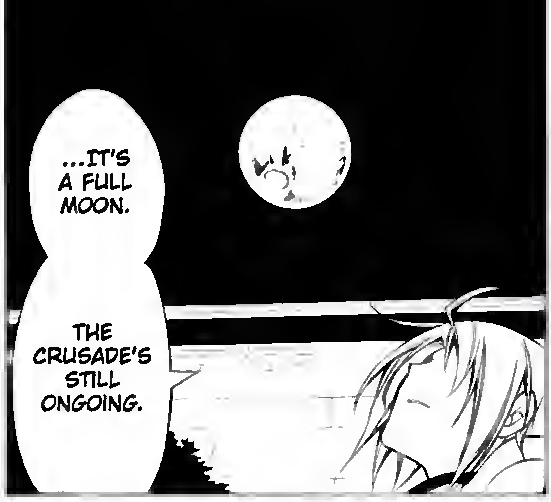
IT WAS JUST A RHETORICAL QUESTION! PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
OR SHALL I MAKE YOUR MOLARS CLATTER?
PERHAPS I SHOULD GIVE MY NOTICE?
MERCY!
MERCY!
GIRI
GIRI
GIRI (SQUEEZE)
GIRI
GIRI
WHAT KIND OF SUPER-MASOCHIST ARE YOU?
THAT IS, HOW CAN YOU ASK AN INVALUABLE, OBEDIENT SERVANT, "ARE YOU A SPY?"

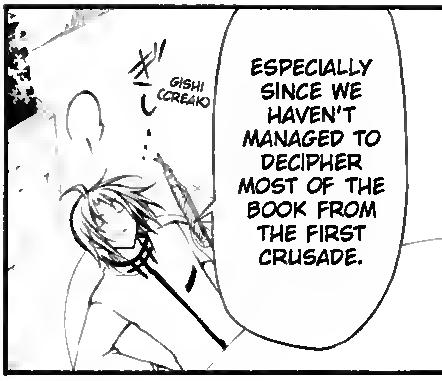

...THEN THE FIFTH, THE PROPHECY BOOK...
...AND FINALLY THE THIRD, THE TWIN SWORDS.
① FOURTH RELIC
② FIFTH RELIC
2
③ THIRD RELICS
WE MOST WANT THE FOURTH, THE CANDELA-BRA...

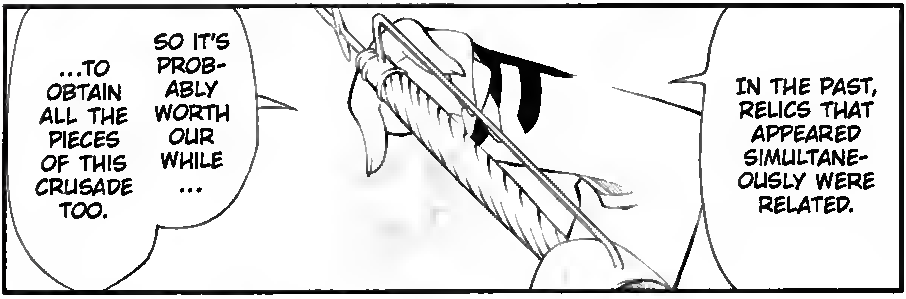
...WELL...
...I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS OUR PRIORI-TIES IN OBTAIN-ING THE DIVINE RELICS...
...PUT-TING ASIDE THE SPY ISSUE FOR NOW...


I'D LIKE TO RECOVER THAT ONE, AT THE VERY LEAST.
THE CANDELA-BRA HAS POWER THAT WILL HELP US DECRYPT AND READ PROPHECY BOOKS.


...YEAH, YOU NAILED IT.
AM I CORRECT IN MY UNDER-STAND-ING?


...IT'S A FULL MOON.
THE CRUSADE'S STILL ONGOING.

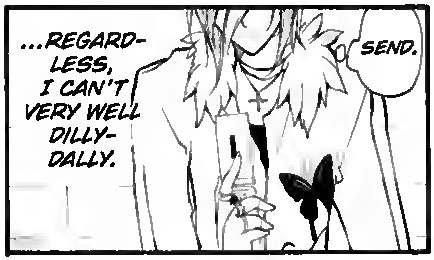

GISHI GOREAKO
ESPECIALLY SINCE WE HAVEN'T MANAGED TO DECIPHER MOST OF THE BOOK FROM THE FIRST CRUSADE.


IN THE PAST, RELICS THAT APPEARED SIMULTANEOUSLY WERE RELATED.
SO IT'S PROBABLY WORTH OUR WHILE ...
...TO OBTAIN ALL THE PIECES OF THIS CRUSADE TOO.

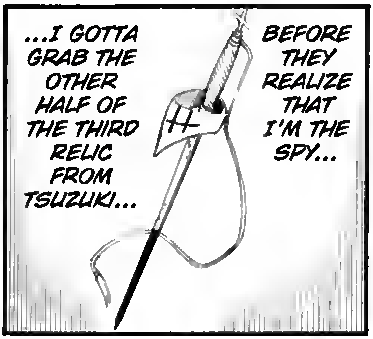
UNTIL ONE SIDE GIVES UP AND WITHDRAWS OR BECOMES INCAPACITATED...
...NO ONE'S RELIC COUNT CAN BE CONSIDERED FINAL.
WE CAN STILL... CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO RETAKE THEM.

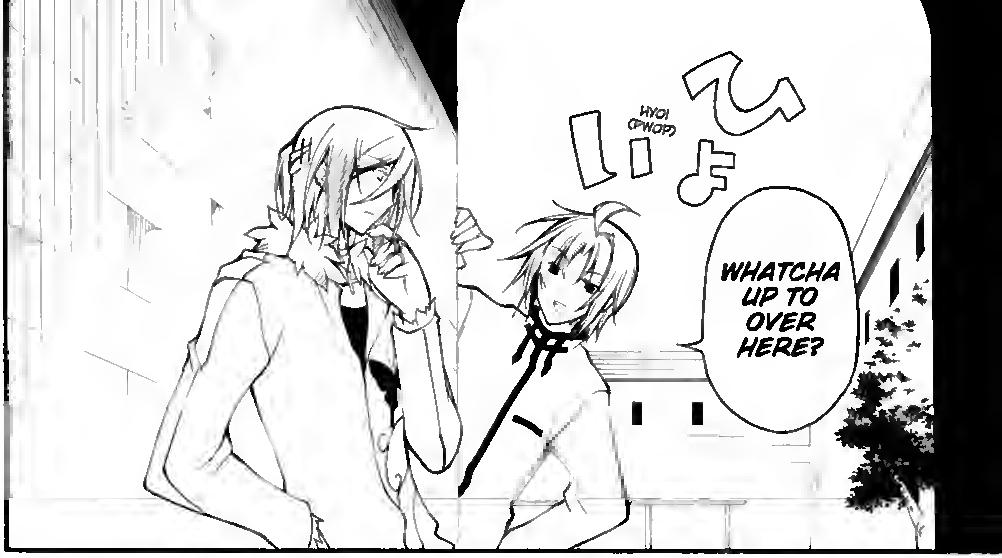
Sounds like they want them in this order: 4th → 5th → 3rd
SEND
OK
MENU

THEIR GUARD SEEMS PRETTY RELAXED, CONSIDERING THEY SUSPECT THEY'VE GOT A SPY.


...REGARDLESS, I CAN'T VERY WELL DILLY-DALLY.
SEND.

...AND GET IT TO SATSUKI...


...I GOTTA GRAB THE OTHER HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC FROM TSUZUKI...
BEFORE THEY REALIZE THAT I'M THE SPY...

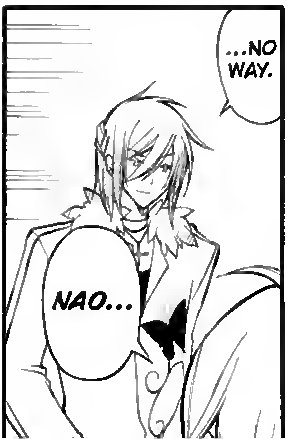

ひょい
HYOI (PWOP)
WHATCHA UP TO OVER HERE?

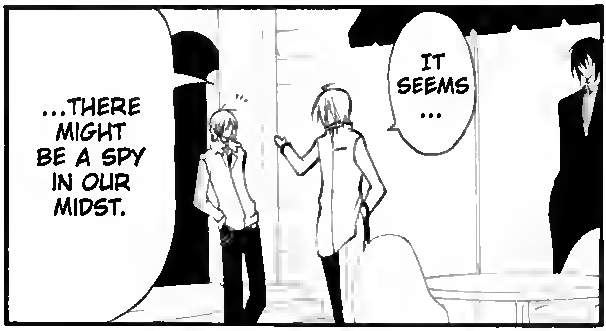
I'M PRACTICING BLENDING IN WITH MY SURROUNDINGS.
WALL BE THE WALL

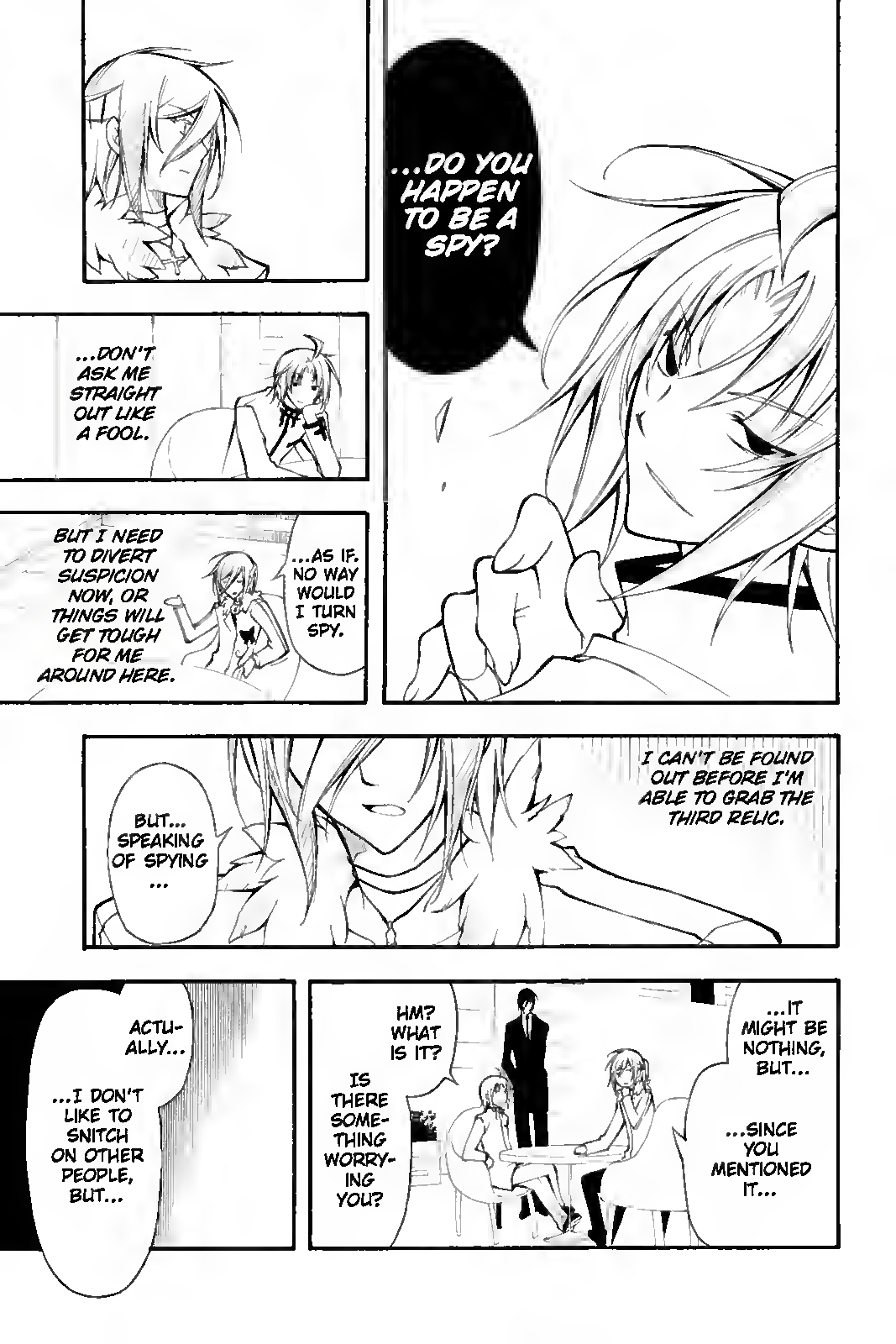
JI (STARE)
OH, UH... UM...

... HUH?

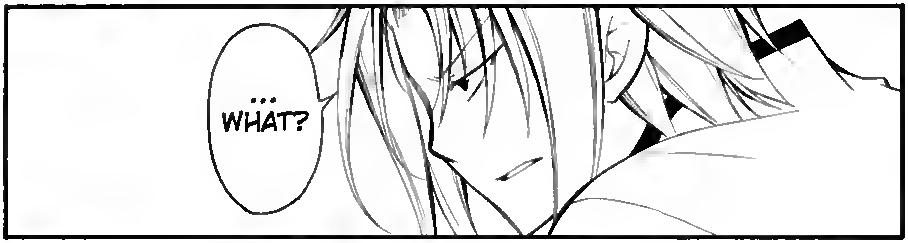
...COME SIT WITH US.
... HMM. WELL, IN ANY CASE...


...NO WAY.
NAO...


IT SEEMS ...
...THERE MIGHT BE A SPY IN OUR MIDST.


...DO YOU HAPPEN TO BE A SPY?
...DON'T ASK ME STRAIGHT OUT LIKE A FOOL.
...AS IF. NO WAY WOULD I TURN SPY.
BUT I NEED TO DIVERT SUSPICION NOW, OR THINGS WILL GET TOUGH FOR ME AROUND HERE.
I CAN'T BE FOUND OUT BEFORE I'M ABLE TO GRAB THE THIRD RELIC.
BUT... SPEAKING OF SPYING ...
...IT MIGHT BE NOTHING, BUT...
...SINCE YOU MENTIONED IT...
HM? WHAT IS IT?
IS THERE SOMETHING WORRYING YOU?
ACTUALLY...
...I DON'T LIKE TO SNITCH ON OTHER PEOPLE, BUT...

TSUKI-MIYA...
...HAS BEEN GATHER-ING DIVINE RELICS ON HER OWN IN SECRET.


...
WHAT?

THIS IS INDEED A DIVINE RELIC.
THOUGH... NOT ONE RELATED TO THE CRUSADES.

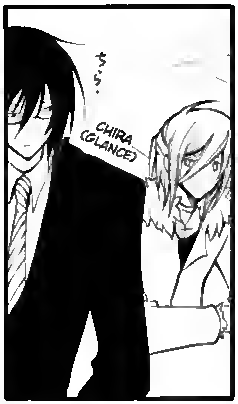
SU (SHP)
I TAILED HER 'COS SHE WAS ACTING ALL SUSPICIOUS.

KACHA CKACHAK!
...HMM.
SHE'S GOT QUITE A FEW RELICS STASHED IN A SECURE VAULT.

I SEE.
RELIC HUNTING IN SECRET...
...IS A BIT SUSPECT, FOR SURE.

ACTUALLY, IF SHE'S THE SPY, WE'RE IN REAL TROUBLE.
WE'VE LET HER IN ON SOME PRETTY SENSITIVE INFORMATION.

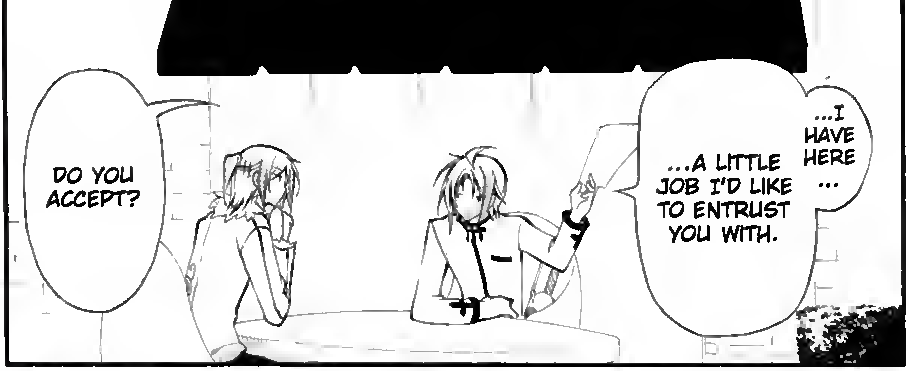
...UNDERSTOOD.

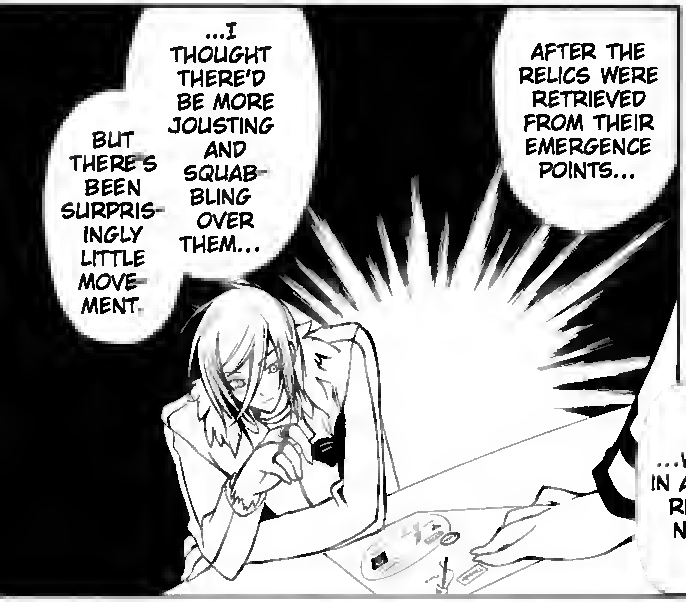

CHIRA (GLANCE)

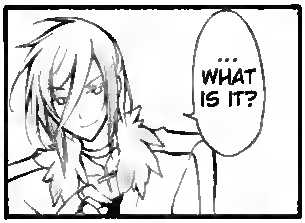
HANAMURA.
KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON TSUKIMIYA.

THANKS FOR THE TIP...
...NAO.
GLAD TO BE OF SERVICE.

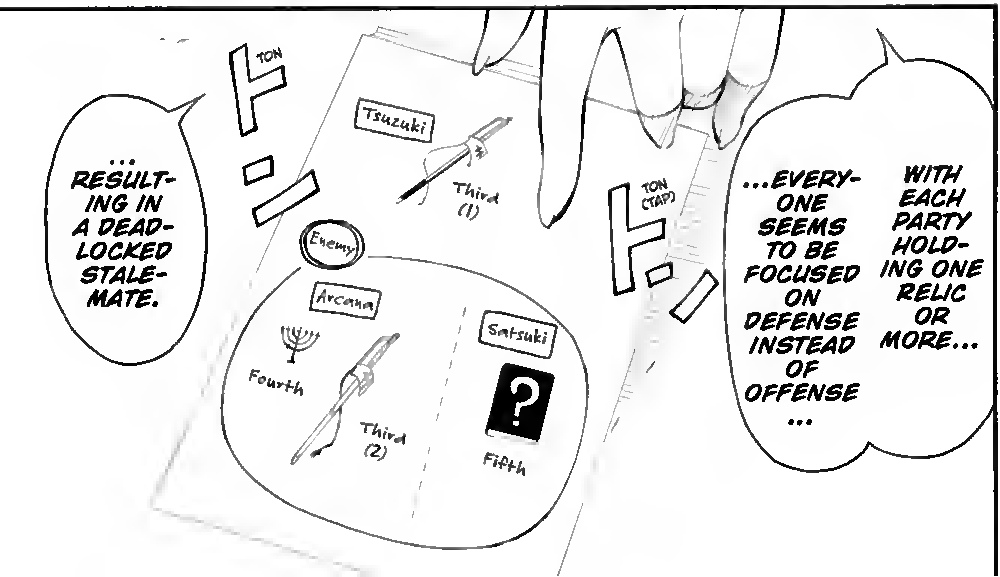
TOO EASY, LORD SIMPLETON.
—IN ANY CASE, I THINK I'VE ALLAYED TSUZUKI'S DOUBTS AT LEAST.
...AND HAND IT OVER TO SATSUKI...
I GOTTA STEAL THE OTHER HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC QUICK...
HANAMURA STILL SEEMS TO DISTRUST ME...
THEN AGAIN, I CAN'T RELAX YET.
...OR ELSE.....
I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN...!
...BY THE WAY ...
OR ELSE... MY AGREE-MENT WITH SATSUKI MAY BE IN JEOPARDY TOO.


DO YOU ACCEPT?
...A LITTLE JOB I'D LIKE TO ENTRUST YOU WITH.
...I HAVE HERE ...


BUT THERE'S BEEN SURPRISINGLY LITTLE MOVEMENT.
...I THOUGHT THERE'D BE MORE JOUSTING AND SQUABBLING OVER THEM...
AFTER THE RELICS WERE RETRIEVED FROM THEIR EMERGENCE POINTS...

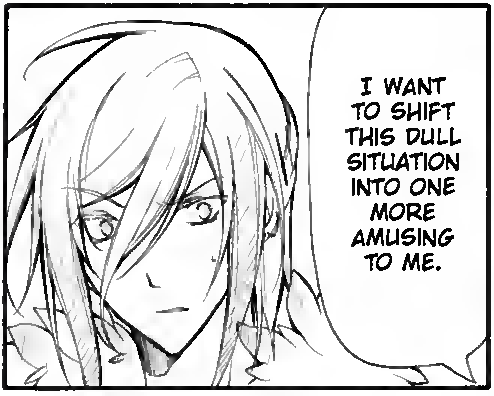

...WHAT IS IT?

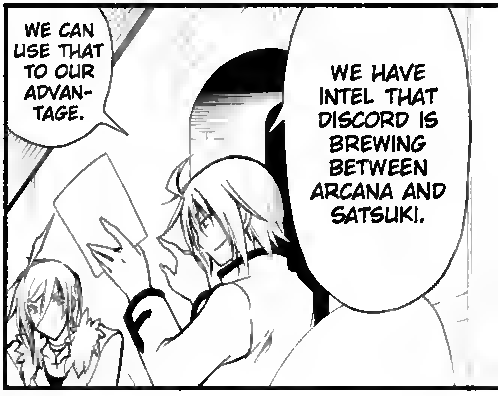
ACTUALLY...
...WE'RE IN A BIND RIGHT NOW.
PIRA (FLAP)

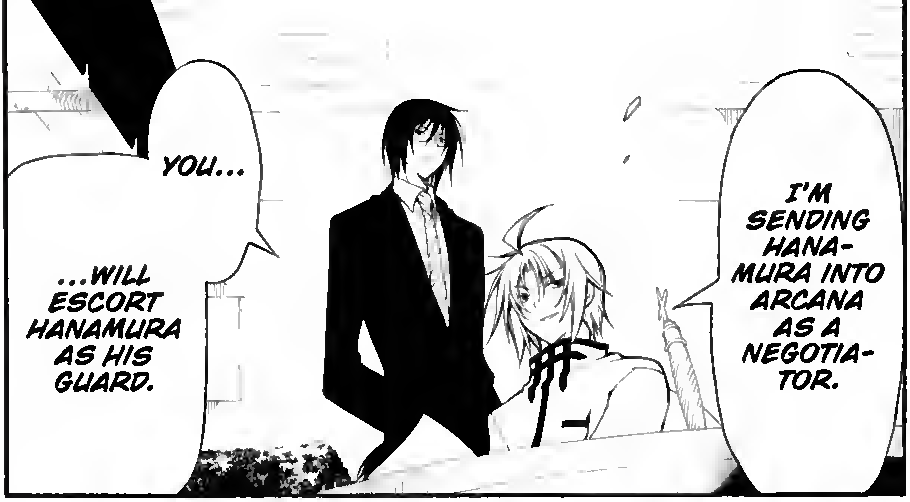

...RESULTING IN A DEADLOCKED STALEMATE.
TON
Tsuzuki
Third (1)
Enemy
Arcana
Fourth
Third (2)
Satsuki
?
Fifth
TON (TAP)
...EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE FOCUSED ON DEFENSE INSTEAD OF OFFENSE ...
WITH EACH PARTY HOLDING ONE RELIC OR MORE...

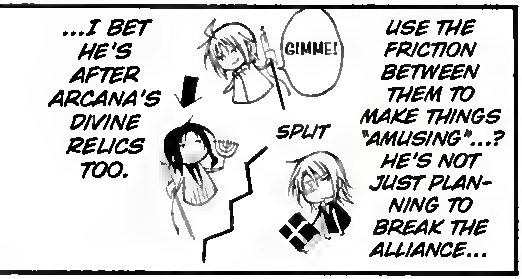
SO?
SO...
...I'VE BEEN THINK-ING...

...IF WE WANT TO STIR UP SOME ACTION...
TSU (SHIP)
...WE CAN GET ARCANA TO DO IT FOR US.
Yamaoka
Third (1)
Chorus
Arcana
Satsuki
Fourth
Third (2)
?
Fifth


I WANT TO SHIFT THIS DULL SITUATION INTO ONE MORE AMUSING TO ME.


WE CAN USE THAT TO OUR ADVAN-TAGE.
WE HAVE INTEL THAT DISCORD IS BREWING BETWEEN ARCANA AND SATSUKI.


I'M SENDING HANA-MURA INTO ARCANA AS A NEGOTIA-TOR.
YOU...
...WILL ESCORT HANAMURA AS HIS GUARD.


...I BET HE'S AFTER ARCANA'S DIVINE RELICS TOO.
GIMME!
SPLIT
USE THE FRICTION BETWEEN THEM TO MAKE THINGS "AMUSING"...? HE'S NOT JUST PLAN-NING TO BREAK THE ALLIANCE...

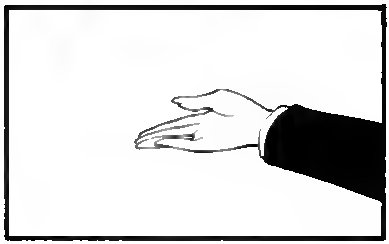
IN WHICH CASE...

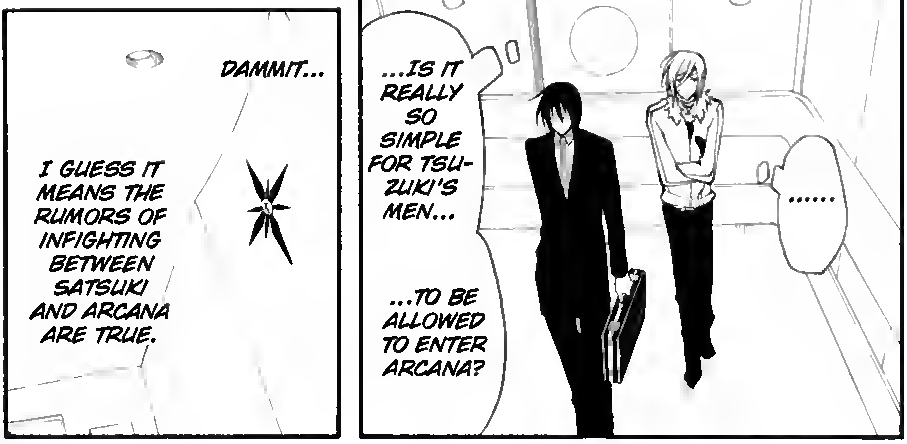
DISCORD BETWEEN SATSUKI AND ARCANA? BUT...I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING...
...BUT IF THEY'RE MAKING A MOVE LIKE THIS, IT MUST BE TRUE.

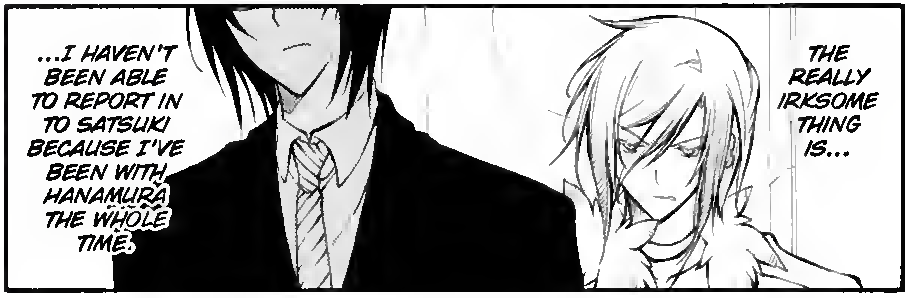
...AND THE ADVAN-TAGE WILL INSTANTLY SWING TO TSUZUKI'S SIDE...
...SATSUKI'S SUPERIOR POSITION WILL BE REVERSED...
WILL YOU DO IT?

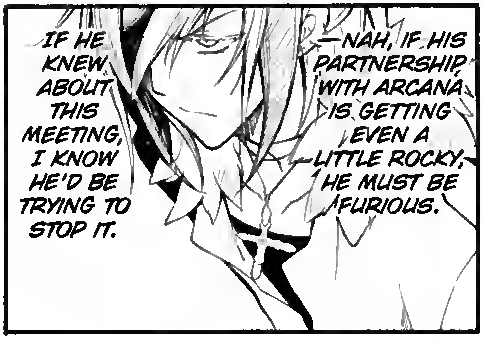
WITH PLEA-SURE.
—...
...OF COURSE.

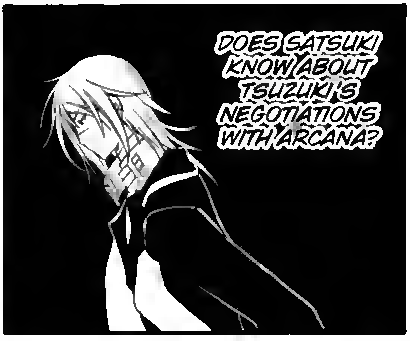
KATSU TAKO

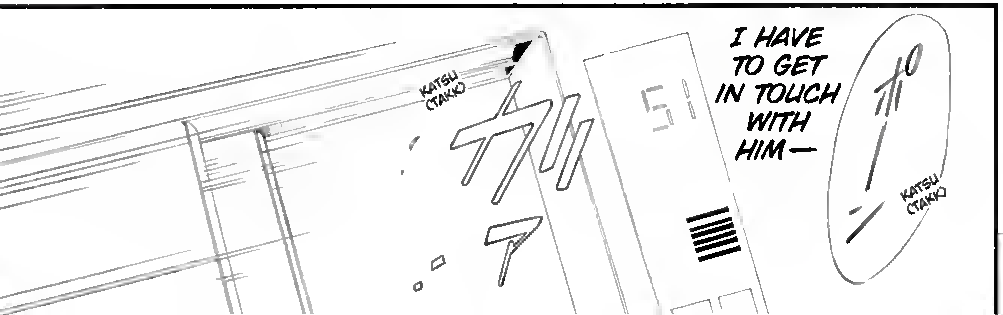


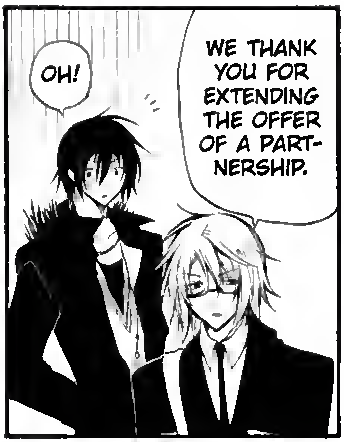

DAMMIT...
I GUESS IT MEANS THE RUMORS OF INFIGHTING BETWEEN SATSUKI AND ARCANA ARE TRUE.
...IS IT REALLY SO SIMPLE FOR TSUZUKI'S MEN...
...TO BE ALLOWED TO ENTER ARCANA?
.....

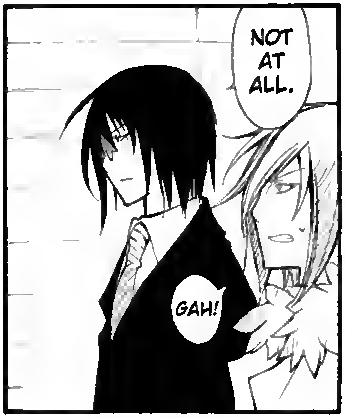

...I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO REPORT IN TO SATSUKI BECAUSE I'VE BEEN WITH HANAMURA THE WHOLE TIME.
THE REALLY IRKSOME THING IS...


IF HE KNEW ABOUT THIS MEETING, I KNOW HE'D BE TRYING TO STOP IT.
—NAH, IF HIS PARTNERSHIP WITH ARCANA IS GETTING EVEN A LITTLE ROCKY, HE MUST BE FURIOUS.

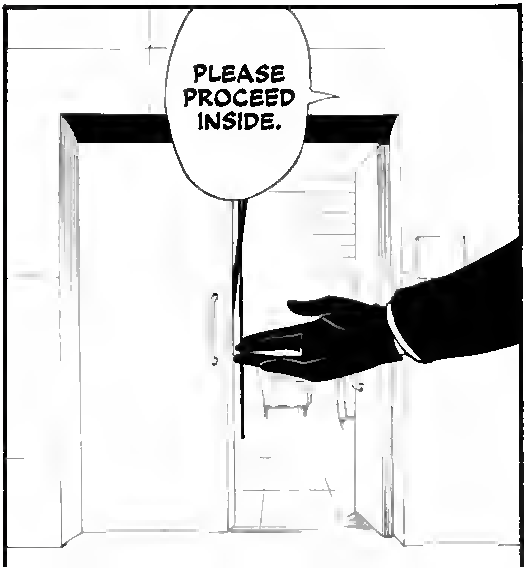

DOES SATSUKI KNOW ABOUT TSUZUKI'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH ARCANA?

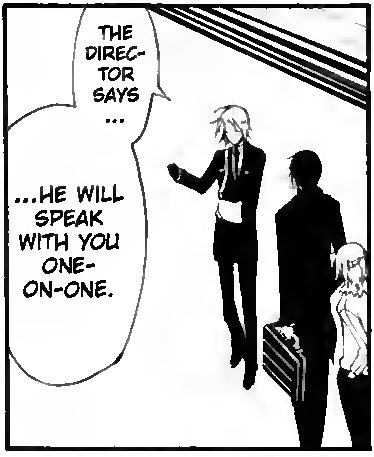

KATSU (TAK)O
I HAVE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM—
KATSU (TAK)O

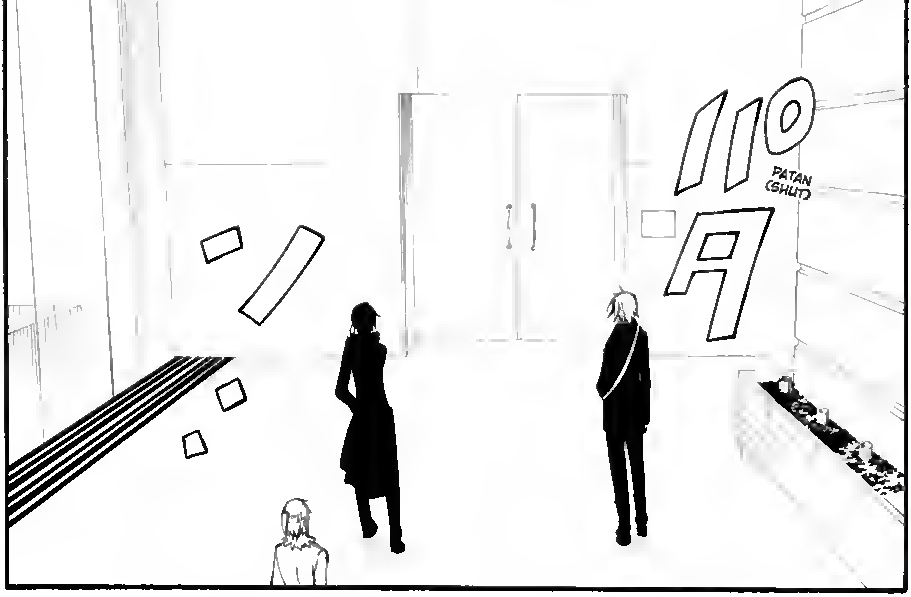

OH!
WE THANK YOU FOR EXTENDING THE OFFER OF A PART-NERSHIP.

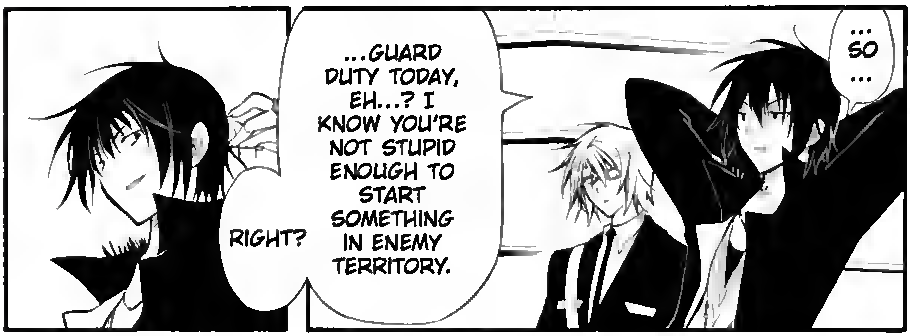

NOT AT ALL.
GAH!

.....
YOU'RE TSU-ZUKI'S AGENT, THEN?


PLEASE PROCEED INSIDE.

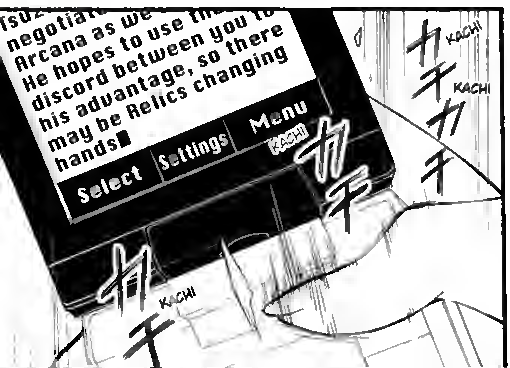

THE DIREC-TOR SAYS ...
...HE WILL SPEAK WITH YOU ONE-ON-ONE.


110
PATAN (SHUT)

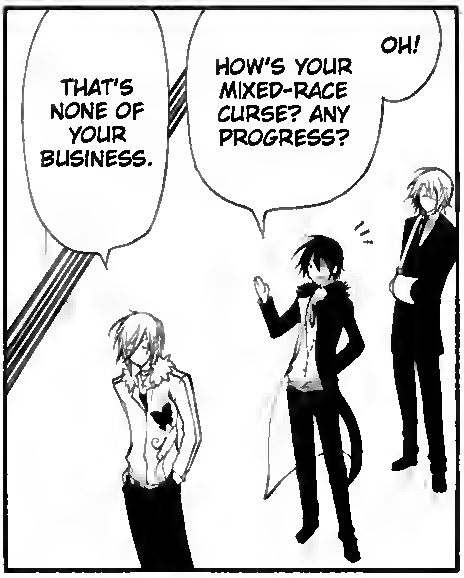

...GUARD DUTY TODAY, EH...? I KNOW YOU'RE NOT STUPID ENOUGH TO START SOMETHING IN ENEMY TERRITORY.
RIGHT?
...SO...

HUH? WHA...? STOMACH CRAMPS ...?
KACHI (TPP) KACHI

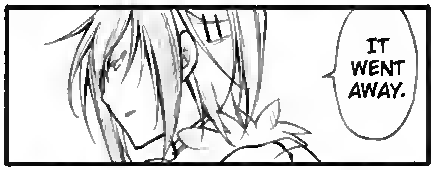
OWW, MY STOM-ACH...
UNH...
DOOH (GLOOM)


Arcana as we
He hopes to use th
discord between you to
his advantage, so there
may be Relics changing
hands
Select
Settings
Menu
KACHI
KACHI
KACHI
KACHI

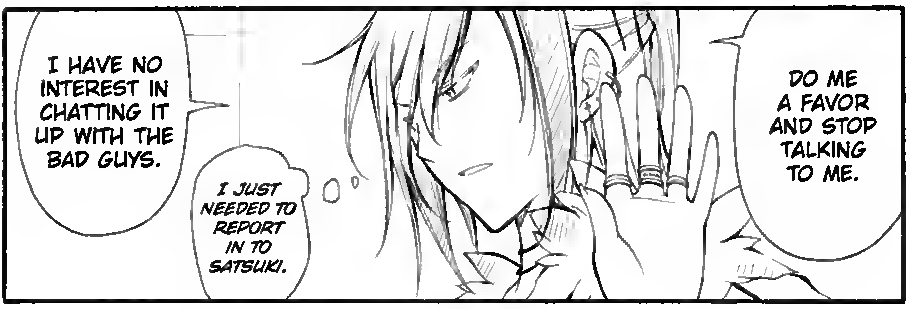
HEY, YOU ALL RIGHT?
SUTA (STAND)


OH!
HOW'S YOUR MIXED-RACE CURSE? ANY PROGRESS?
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

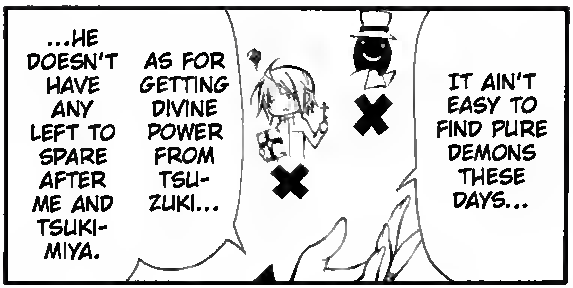
...HUH? WEREN'T YOU IN PAIN?


IT WENT AWAY.

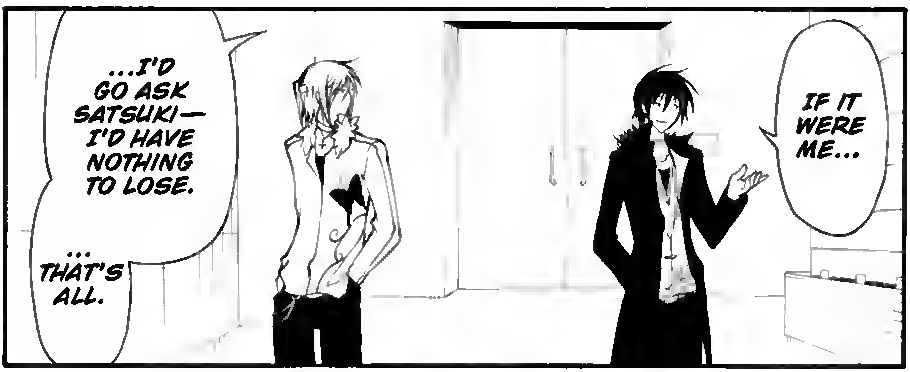
...?
?
.....
... NEVER MIND, THEN.


DO ME A FAVOR AND STOP TALKING TO ME.
I JUST NEEDED TO REPORT IN TO SATSUKI.
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN CHATTING IT UP WITH THE BAD GUYS.

SEEMS SATSUKI HAS A SPY PLANTED AMID YOUR RANKS.
...THAT RE-MINDS ME...
...HUH?
SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU TWO BEEN AT ODDS?
MUKACHIN (PISSED)
I HEAR ...
...THAT PERSON GIVES SATSUKI DETAILED INTEL ON TSUZUKI.
IS IT YOU?
...WHAT?

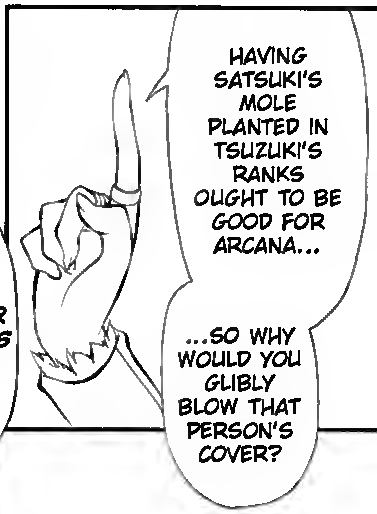

IT AIN'T EASY TO FIND PURE DEMONS THESE DAYS...
AS FOR GETTING DIVINE POWER FROM TSUZUKI...
...HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY LEFT TO SPARE AFTER ME AND TSUKIMIYA.

I MEAN...
...YOU HAVEN'T FOUND A WAY...
...TO UNDO YOUR CURSE YET, HAVE YOU?


IF IT WERE ME...
...I'D GO ASK SATSUKI— I'D HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE.
...
THAT'S ALL.

I GOTTA SAY, THIS IS A STRANGE CONVERSATION.
...
HAAH.

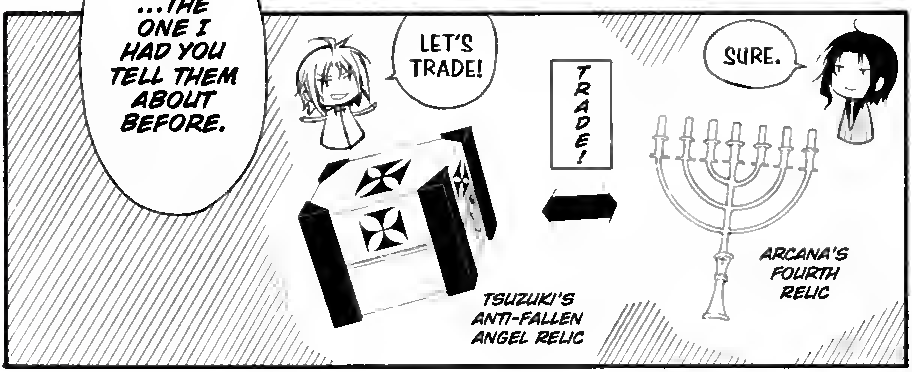
TON (TAP)
...MAKE YOU SEEM MORE LIKE TSUZUKI'S MAN THAN ARCANA'S.
...YOUR ACTIONS ...

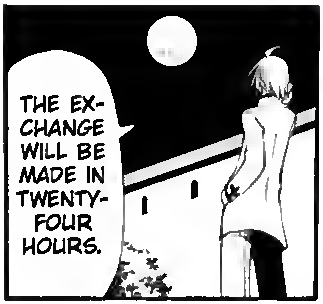

HAVING SATSUKI'S MOLE PLANTED IN TSUZUKI'S RANKS OUGHT TO BE GOOD FOR ARCANA...
...SO WHY WOULD YOU GLIBLY BLOW THAT PERSON'S COVER?

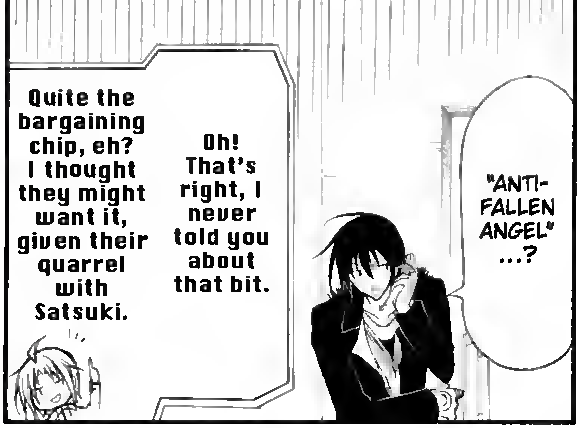
!!
RI (TENSE)
I FEEL A BIT LEFT OUT.
PI (TENSE)
ガチャ
GACHA (CLICK)
HEL-LO?
FIRST THINGS FIRST—I'M CALLING TSUZUKI.
HOW'D IT GO?
PI (BEEP)
!

...HUH?
A TRADE!?

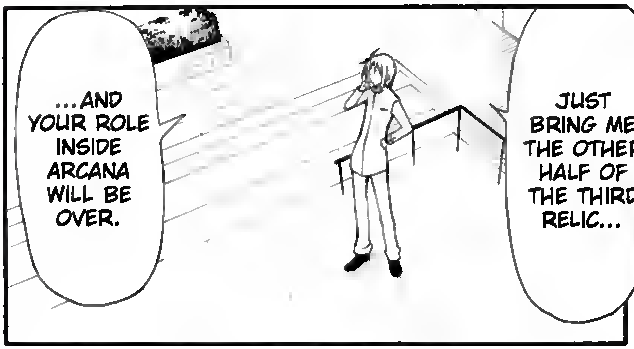
IN EXCHANGE...
Arcana will give me the Fourth Relic.
Yes.
WE WILL GIVE THEM THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC IN OUR POSSESSION...
...THE ONE I HAD YOU TELL THEM ABOUT BEFORE.


LET'S TRADE!
TRADE!
SURE.
TSUZUKI'S ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC
ARCANA'S FOURTH RELIC


THE EXCHANGE WILL BE MADE IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.


"ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL" ...?
Oh! That's right, I never told you about that bit.
Quite the bargaining chip, eh? I thought they might want it, given their quarrel with Satsuki.

YOUR REPORT ON THE FRICTION BETWEEN SATSUKI AND ARCANA...
...WAS PUT TO GOOD USE.
NICE WORK!


JUST BRING ME THE OTHER HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC...
...AND YOUR ROLE INSIDE ARCANA WILL BE OVER.

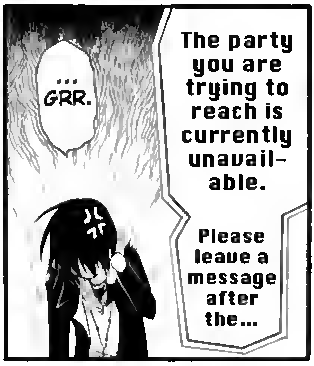
WAIT A SEC. ...
THAT —

Get out before they peg you as a spy — or do what you can protect yourself.

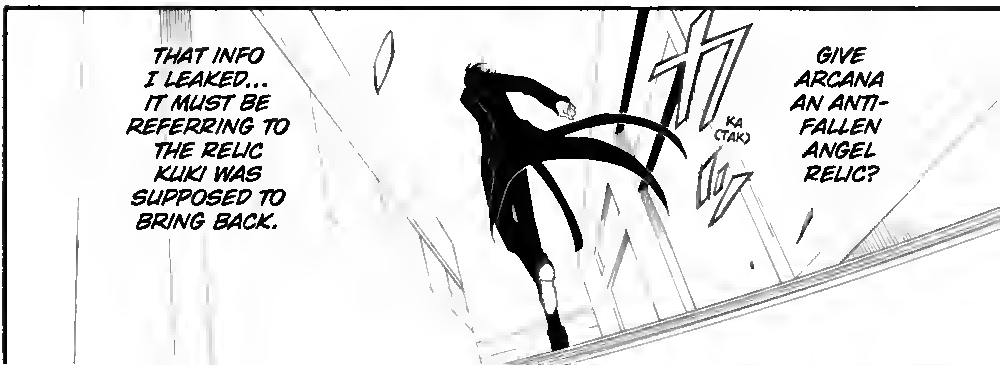
IT AIN'T THAT SIMPLE.
NO...

YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND A SINGLE THING!!
YOU ARE THE IDIOT KING!

WAI-
GAN (SHOCK)
HEY!
HUH ...?
BUTSU (CLICK)
On to other busi-ness! Gotta go!
Well, then!

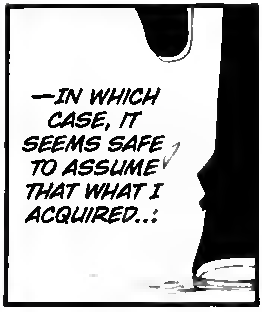

... GRR.
The party you are trying to reach is currently unavail-able.
Please leave a message after the...

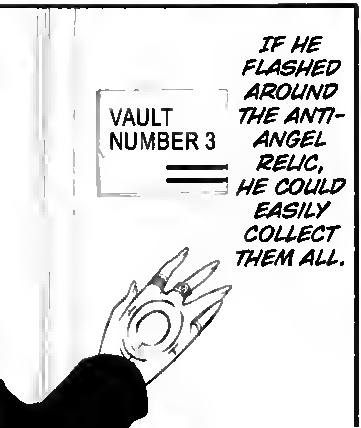
I WASN'T DONE YET...!
POCHI (TAP) POCHI

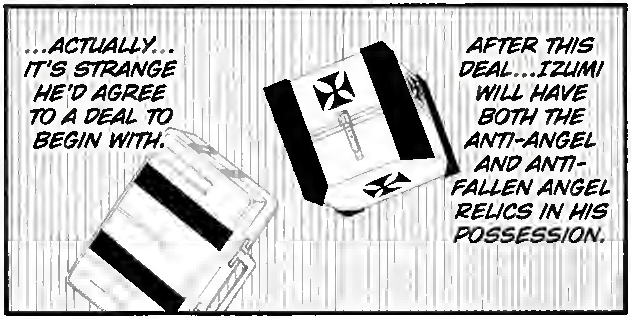

THAT INFO I LEAKED... IT MUST BE REFERRING TO THE RELIC KUKI WAS SUPPOSED TO BRING BACK.
KA (TAK)
GIVE ARCANA AN ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC?

...IS AN ANTI-ANGEL RELIC!

RIGHT AT THAT SAME TIME, MAKINO AND I WERE SENT TO A SIMILAR PLACE TO RETRIEVE A SIMILAR RELIC...
...AND WE GAVE THAT RELIC TO IZUMI.


—IN WHICH CASE, IT SEEMS SAFE TO ASSUME THAT WHAT I ACQUIRED..:


VAULT NUMBER 3
IF HE FLASHED AROUND THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC, HE COULD EASILY COLLECT THEM ALL.


...ACTUALLY... IT'S STRANGE HE'D AGREE TO A DEAL TO BEGIN WITH.
AFTER THIS DEAL...IZUMI WILL HAVE BOTH THE ANTI-ANGEL AND ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELICS IN HIS POSSESSION.

THE COURSE OF THE CRUSADES WILL BE TURNED COMPLETELY ON ITS HEAD!
...WILL GIVE ARCANA, THE TRUMP CARDS TO TOP BOTH TSUZUKI AND SATSUKI...
1/0
THIS DEAL...
PATAN (SHUT)

GACHA (KACHA)
DAM-MIT...
WHERE IS IT?

...PUT THAT RELIC IN THIS VAULT HIMSELF.
...I'M PRETTY SURE I'LL IM!...
.....

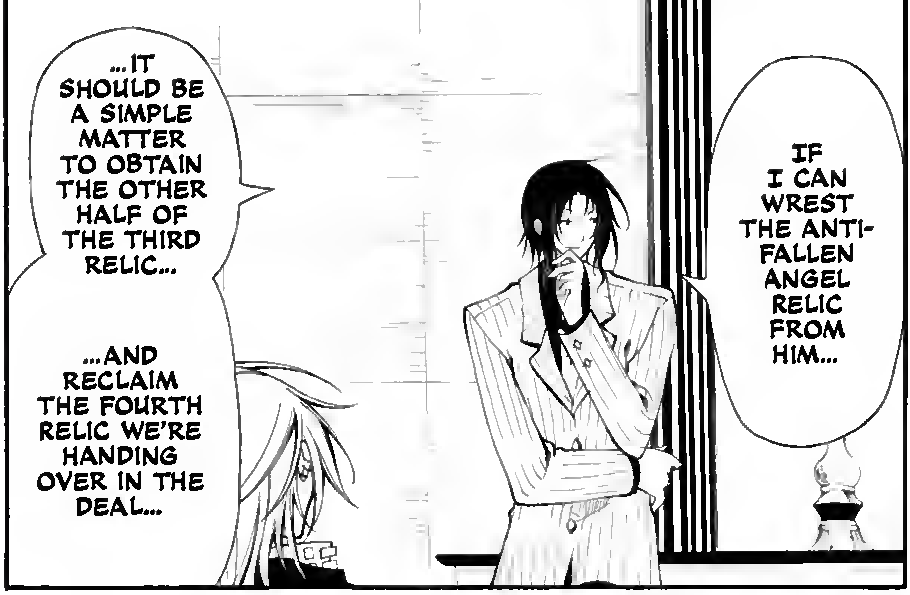
GA (GRIP)

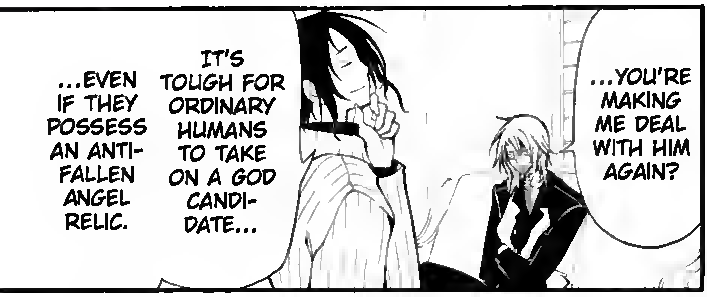
TCH.
IF I'M FOUND OUT RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT NO EXCUSE.
A THEFT LIKE THIS REALLY OUGHT TO BE PLANNED OUT MORE CAREFULLY.

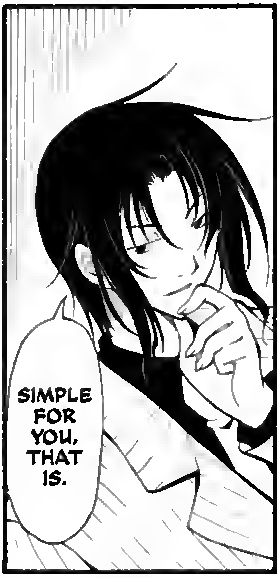
I...
...HAVE THE WORST LUCK.
THAT FOOL... I'M GONNA CLOBBER HIM.

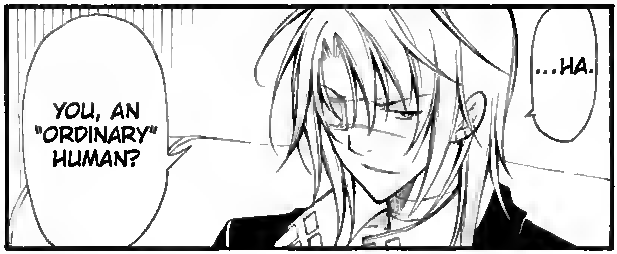
...THERE.
GA (GRAB)
—BY THE BY...
...TSUZUKI OFFERED ME A TRADE JUST NOW.

IT SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED TO OUR BENEFIT...
...NOT TROUBLING TO FERRET OUT HIS SPY.
THEY'VE TAKEN THE BAIT, THIS TALE ABOUT OUR CRUMBLING ALLIANCE...
...AND ARE OFFERING THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC AS A BARGAINING CHIP.


IF I CAN WREST THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC FROM HIM...
...IT SHOULD BE A SIMPLE MATTER TO OBTAIN THE OTHER HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC...
...AND RECLAIM THE FOURTH RELIC WE'RE HANDING OVER IN THE DEAL...


...YOU'RE MAKING ME DEAL WITH HIM AGAIN?
IT'S TOUGH FOR ORDINARY HUMANS TO TAKE ON A GOD CANDI-DATE...
...EVEN IF THEY POSSESS AN ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC.


SIMPLE FOR YOU, THAT IS.


...HA.
YOU, AN "ORDINARY" HUMAN?

LET'S COMBINE OUR EFFORTS...
...TO PUSH TSUZUKI DOWN.

.....
IN ANY CASE, WE'RE ALLIES IN THIS.

I GOTTA TELL TSUZUKI...
The number you have dialed is currently—
...DAMMIT!
DAN
DAN
DAN

—BUT THERE'S A CHANCE ANY OF THE OTHERS COULD BE SATSUKI'S SPY.
I NEED TO REACH SOMEONE ON TSUZUKI'S SIDE...
DOESN'T MATTER WHO—
NAO'S THE MOST SUSPECT.
BUT I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE THAT HANA-MURA AND TSU-KIMIYA ARE CLEAN.
Tsukimiya
Tsuzuki
KACHI (CLICK)
...GUH!
View
Menu
Tsukimiya
XXX-XXXX-XXXX
CALL
(PI (BEEP))

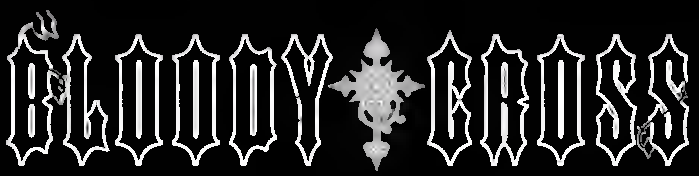
ブツ
BUTSU
(CLICK)

HUH?

...WHAT-EVER...
...ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HINA-TA.

SO YOU...

...WERE THE TRAITOR AFTER ALL.


BLOODY CROSS

BLOODY CROSS

HINA-
TA.
SO
YOU...
...WERE
THE
TRAITOR
AFTER
ALL.
カハ

Chapter 21

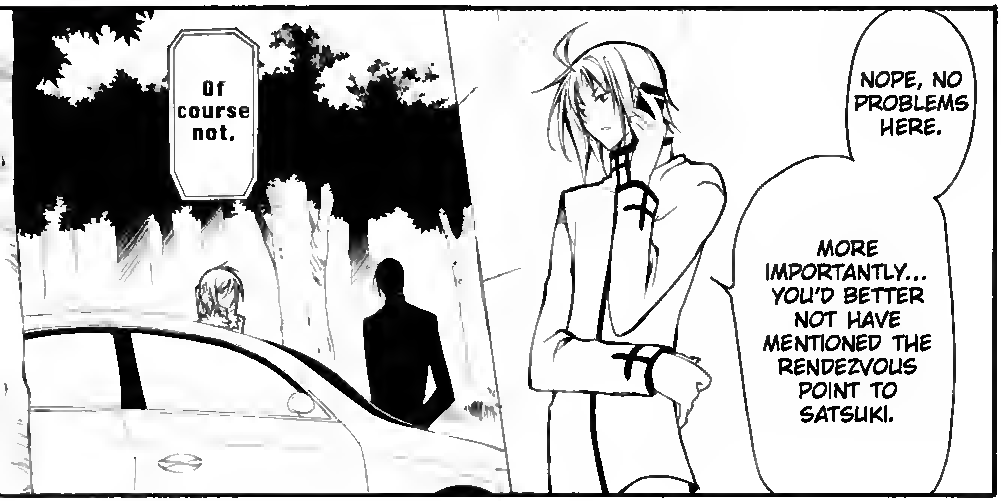
The Scapegoat

Chapter 21
The Scapegoat

BLOODY CROSS

KATSU (TAK)
—...
YES... WE ARE READYING FOR THE EXCHANGE AS WELL.

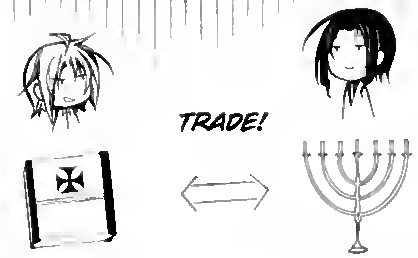
KATSU
KATSU
TWO HOURS FROM NOW, AS SCHEDULED... NO HICCUPS ON YOUR END...
...TSU-ZUKI?


Of course not.
NOPE, NO PROBLEMS HERE.
MORE IMPORTANTLY... YOU'D BETTER NOT HAVE MENTIONED THE RENDEZVOUS POINT TO SATSUKI.

I'd like to avoid any mistakes.

...Oh, and... ...let's confirm the specifics one more time.

...for the Anti-Fallen Angel Relic in your possession.



Arcana will trade the Fourth Divine Relic — Candelabra...

You've told me five times already.

If I'm late or don't show up myself, the deal is off... right?

CORRECT.

AND WE'RE KEEPING TO A STRICT TIMETABLE!

The exchange —

WILL BE MADE DIRECTLY BETWEEN YOU AND ME — NO ONE ELSE CAN MAKE THE HANDOFF!

Yeah.
Can't wait.
PUTSU (BOOP)
THEN ...
...I WILL SEE YOU IN TWO HOURS.
OPEN IT.
KASHAN (CLUNK)
GACHA (CKACHAK)

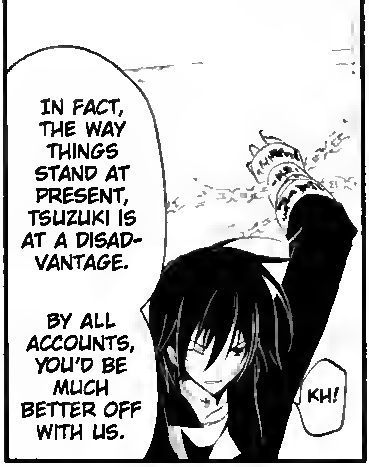
WELL, WELL...

...YOU STILL ALIVE, HINATA?

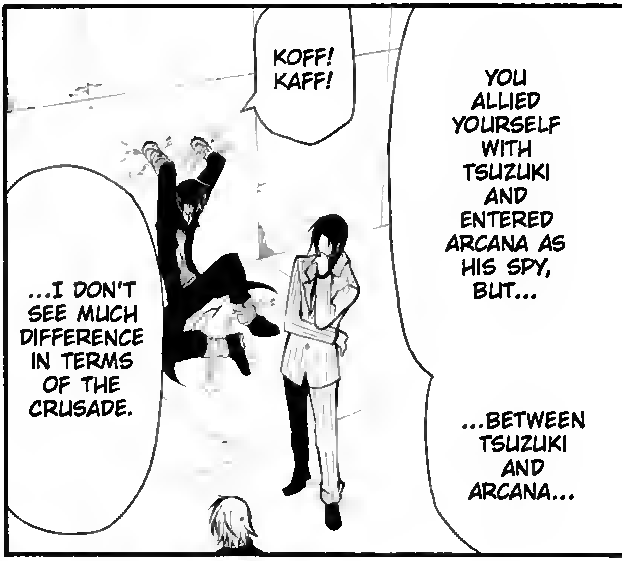
THANK-FULLY...
...OUR DEAL WITH TSUZUKI IS PRO-CEEDING SMOOTHLY.
KOTSU (TOO)

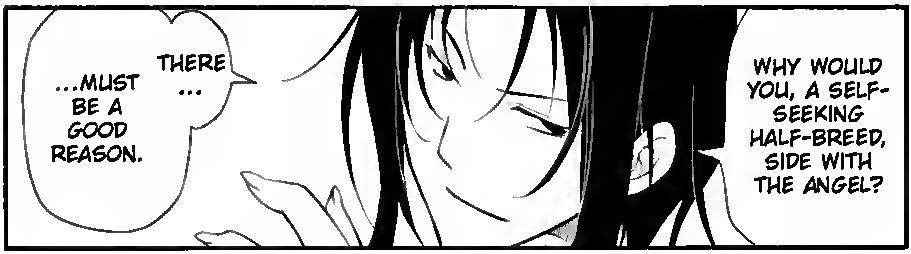
...HE REFUSES TO SAY A WORD.
MM...

GA (GRAB)
I'M AFRAID YOU'D ONLY GET UNDERFOOT, SO UNTIL THE DEAL HAS BEEN COM-PLETED...
...BE A GOOD BOY AND STAY HERE.
...."DEAL," MY ASS...
GUGU (SQUEEZE)
WITH BOTH OF THEM IN YOUR HANDS, YOU'LL USE THE RELICS... TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE CRUSADES!
YOU'LL USE THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING UNDER WRAPS TO STEAL TSUZUKI'S ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC...
...AH, YES...
I WANTED TO ASK YOU SOME-THING.
PA (SLAP)


IN FACT, THE WAY THINGS STAND AT PRESENT, TSUZUKI IS AT A DISAD-VANTAGE.
BY ALL ACCOUNTS, YOU'D BE MUCH BETTER OFF WITH US.
KH!

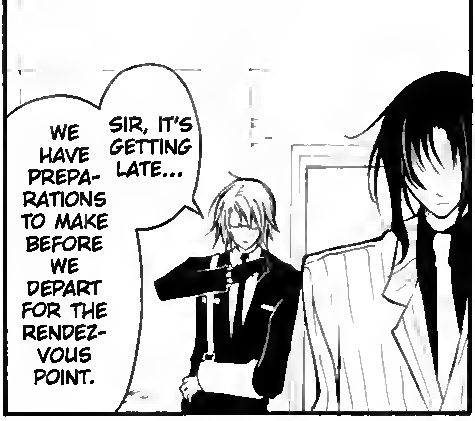
AND YET YOUR LOYALTY REMAINS WITH THE INFERIOR TSUZUKI...

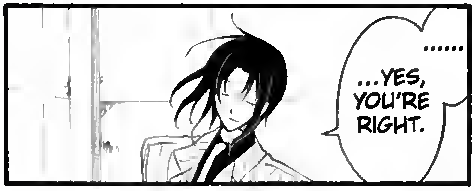

KOFF! KAFF!
YOU ALLIED YOURSELF WITH TSUZUKI AND ENTERED ARCANA AS HIS SPY, BUT...
...I DON'T SEE MUCH DIFFERENCE IN TERMS OF THE CRUSADE.
...BETWEEN TSUZUKI AND ARCANA...

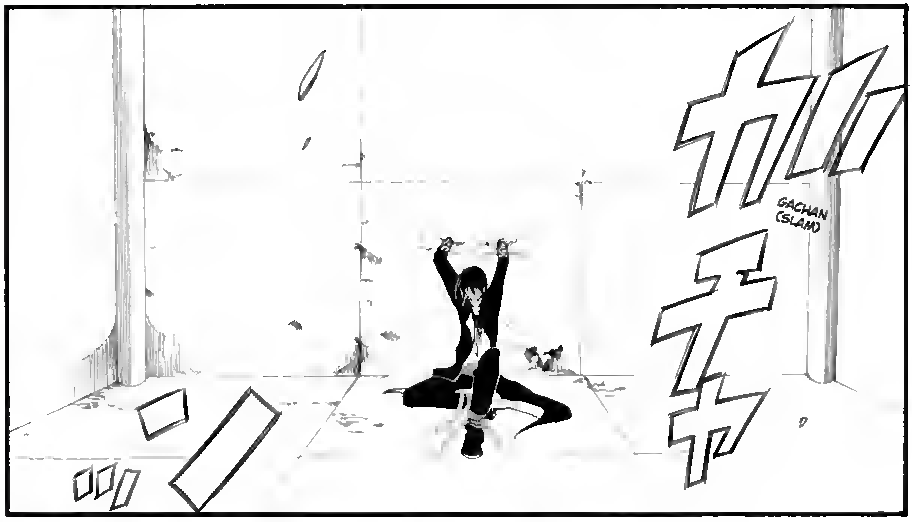

WHY WOULD YOU, A SELF-SEEKING HALF-BREED, SIDE WITH THE ANGEL?
THERE ...
...MUST BE A GOOD REASON.

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
WON'T YOU TELL ME?

TO BE CONTINUED AFTER WE GET BACK!


SIR, IT'S GETTING LATE...
WE HAVE PREPARATIONS TO MAKE BEFORE WE DEPART FOR THE RENDEZVOUS POINT.

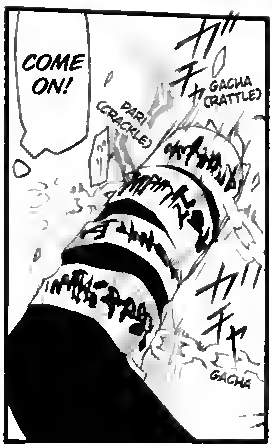

.....
...YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.


GACHAN (SLAM)

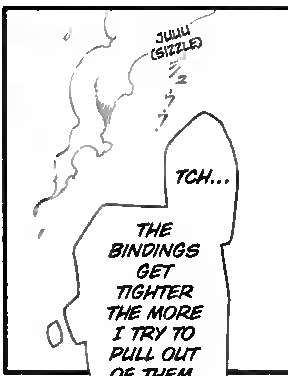
KOFF...

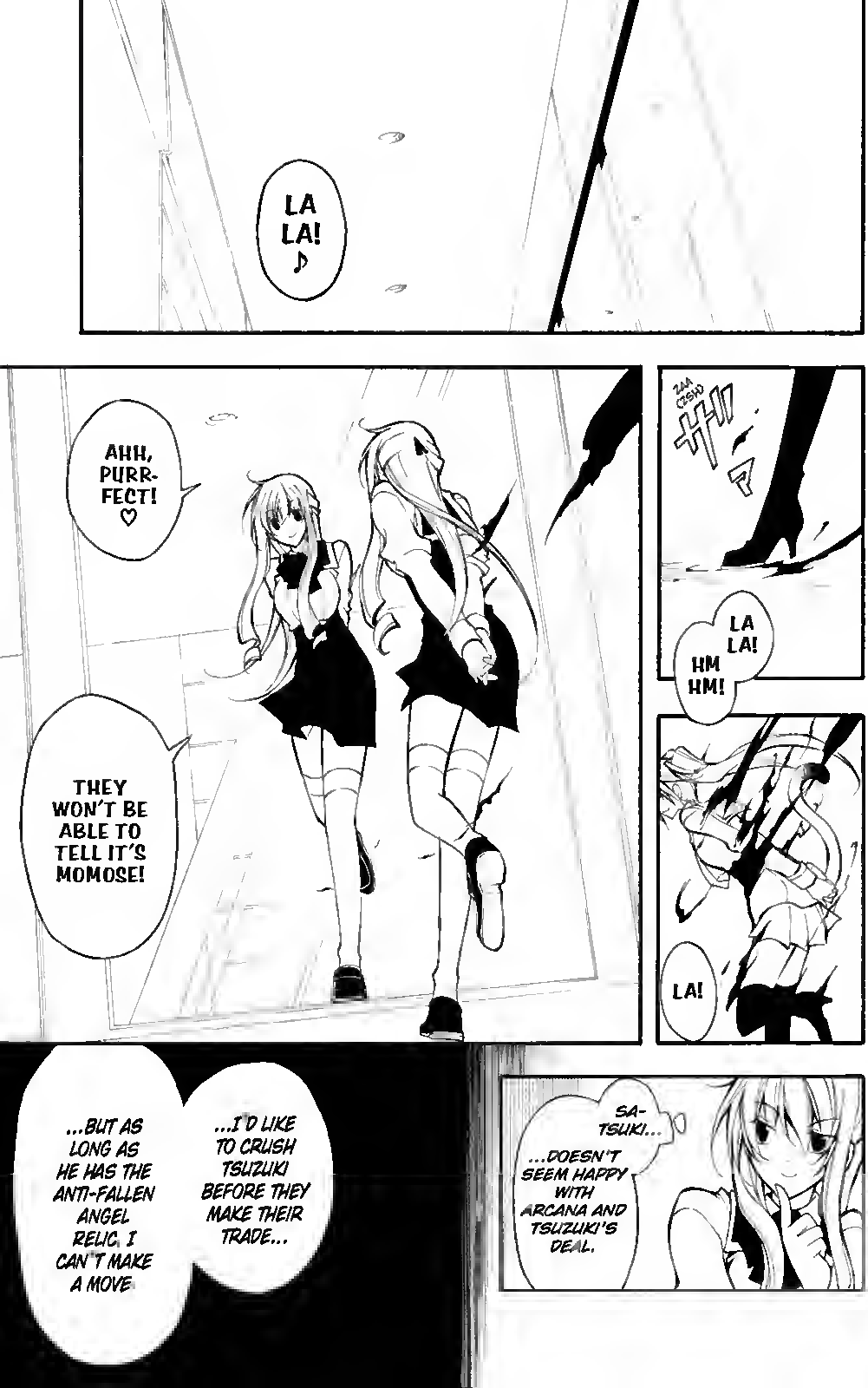
GA CYANKO

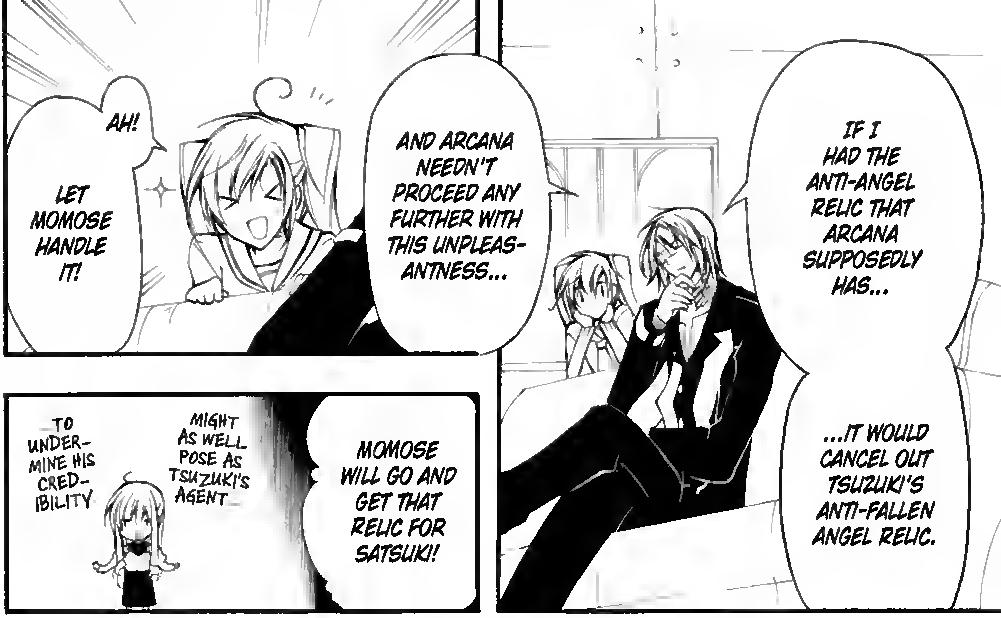
JUU (ZZAP)
AGH ...!

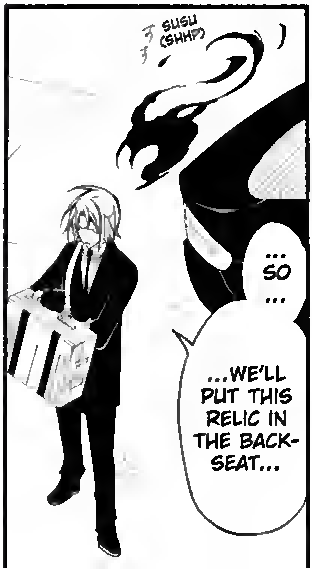

COME ON!
GACHA (RATTLE)
PARI (CRACKLE)
GACHA

...ARCANA HAS AN ANTI-ANGEL RELIC...!!
DAMMIT... I HAVE TO LET TSUZUKI KNOW...

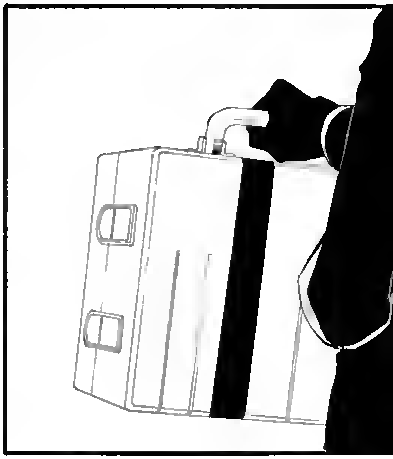

JUUU (SIZZLE)
TCH...
THE BINDINGS GET TIGHTER THE MORE I TRY TO PULL OUT OF THEM, HUH...


LA LA! ♪
AHH, PURR-FECT! ♡
THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL IT'S MOMOSE!
ZAA (SFX)
HM HM!
LA LA!
LA!
...I'D LIKE TO CRUSH TSUZUKI BEFORE THEY MAKE THEIR TRADE...
...BUT AS LONG AS HE HAS THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC, I CAN'T MAKE A MOVE
SA-TSUKI...
...DOESN'T SEEM HAPPY WITH ARCANA AND TSUZUKI'S DEAL.


AH!
LET MOMOSE HANDLE IT!
AND ARCANA NEEDN'T PROCEED ANY FURTHER WITH THIS UNPLEASANTNESS...
IF I HAD THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC THAT ARCANA SUPPOSEDLY HAS...
...IT WOULD CANCEL OUT TSUZUKI'S ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC.
MOMOSE WILL GO AND GET THAT RELIC FOR SATSUKI!
TO UNDERMINE HIS CREDIBILITY
MIGHT AS WELL POSE AS TSUZUKI'S AGENT


SUSU (SHHP)
...SO...
...WE'LL PUT THIS RELIC IN THE BACKSEAT...

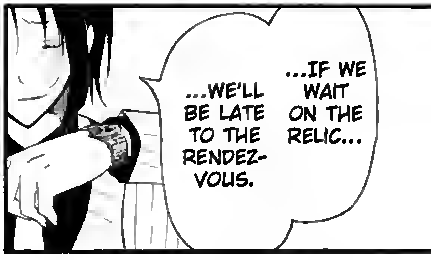
FOUND IT!
DOPU (BLOOP)



...HUH?
TO (THWIP)
BYE-BYE!
HUH ...!?
WAIT!
NO WAY!
HIRA
HIRA (WAVE)
ピヒョロ
BA (SNATCH)
MINE NOW.
D-DAM-MIT!
GET IT BACK!!
ROGER.
UH-OH!

WHAT TO DO NOW...

...PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
WE'LL RE-TRIEVE IT RIGHT AWAY.
P...


...IF WE WAIT ON THE RELIC...
...WE'LL BE LATE TO THE RENDEZ-VOUS.

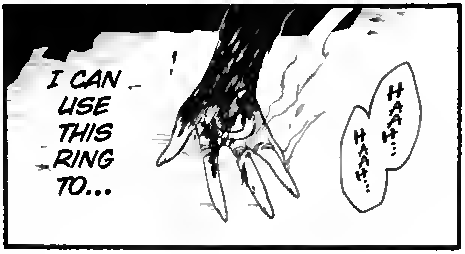
HAAH.
HEF.

I HAVE TO TELL TSUZUKI... TO CALL OFF THE DEAL...
JUUUU (ZZZ..P)
GUGU
GU
...YOU...
K...

GU (STRAIN)
JU (SZZ)
UNH...

GNH ...!!
BARI (RRRIP)

RELAX.
OM
HF.
HF.

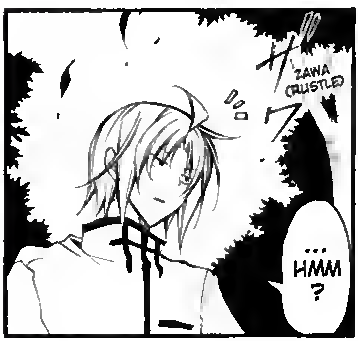

I CAN USE THIS RING TO...
HAAH...
HAAH...

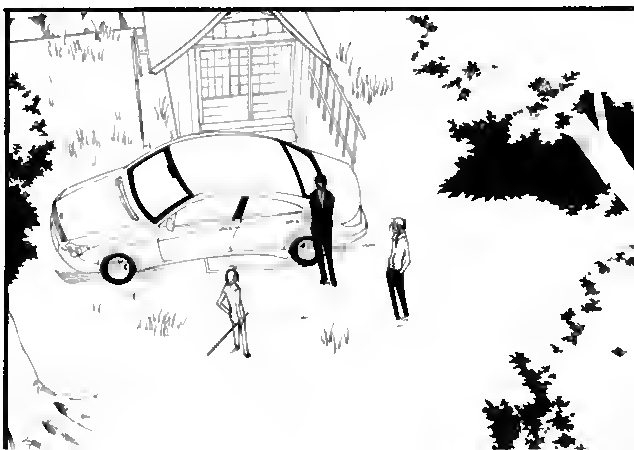
PAKI (CRACK)
SAAA (SHH)

"...ARCANA ...HAS AN ANTI-ANGEL RELIC...
"DO NOT ENGAGE."
VUN (WHM)

GO.
FU (FFT)

...
I DID IT...


ZAWA (RUSTLE)
... HMM ?

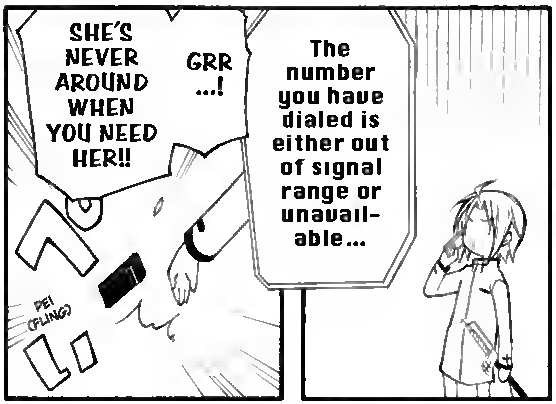


...ARCANA...
...HAS AN ANTI-ANGEL RELIC.
DO NOT ENGAGE.
IDOL & CYPHOOD
WHA...!?
!
AN ANTI... ANGEL RELIC!?
THAT'S HINATA'S VOICE...
TCH... HINATA'S BEEN CAUGHT BY ARCANA, HUH?
SENDING MESSAGES BY ANY MEANS OTHER THAN BY PHONE WERE TO BE A LAST RESORT...
...SINCE IT WOULD ALERT THE ENEMY

WON'T IT BE DANGEROUS TO GO THROUGH WITH THE DEAL?
.....
WHAT NOW?

BUT THAT MIGHT'VE BEEN ARCANA'S THINKING AS WELL— A TRAP.

...BUT I DON'T WANT TO CALL IT OFF.
THIS IS OUR BEST CHANCE TO OBTAIN THE FOURTH RELIC.

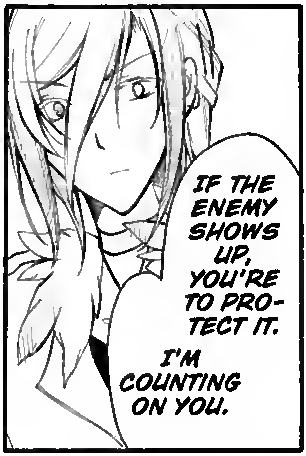

SHE'S NEVER AROUND WHEN YOU NEED HER!!
GRR ...!
PEI CFLING?
The number you have dialed is either out of signal range or unavail-able...

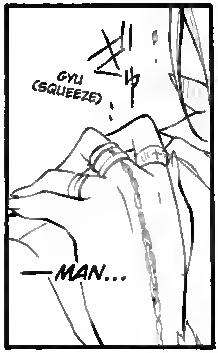
.....
.....
FOR THE MO-MENT...
...LET ME PUT TSUKIMIYA ON IT AT LEAST...
CFEEP?

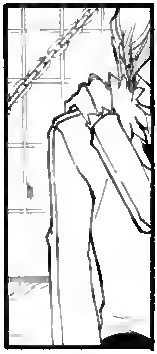
I'LL SEAL MY PIECE OF THE THIRD RELIC IN THIS SHRINE.
LET'S JUST GET A MOVE ON, OR WE'LL BE LATE!
FINE...I'LL COME UP WITH SOME KIND OF COUNTER-STRATEGY AS WE GO!
YES, SIR.
NAO.
YOU STAY HERE ON GUARD DUTY.
GACHA
GACHA CLANK
...WILL MEET WITH ARCANA.
HANA-MURA AND I...
HUH ...?
PAPER· SEAL

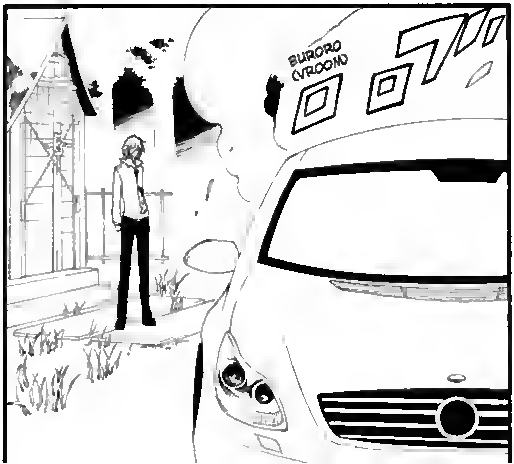
DONE.
CAN'T LEAVE THE THIRD RELIC VULNERABLE TO THE ENEMY, NOW CAN WE?
封ホ
PAPER SEAL

WELL, THEN.
I'M OFF.
TON (PAT)


IF THE ENEMY SHOWS UP, YOU'RE TO PROTECT IT.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.


GYU (SQUEEZE)
—MAN...




BURORO (VROOM)

...SERIOUSLY... WHAT A STUPID GOD CANDIDATE!!
HA...!
TO JUST LEAVE A RELIC IN THE CARE OF HIS ENEMY...
— I have a bad feeling...
...about Arcana and Tsuzuki's deal
YOU MUST HURRY TO OBTAIN TSUZUKI'S THIRD RELIC.
THAT WILL CHANGE THE SWAY OF POWER...
...AND MAKE THEM RETHINK NEGOTIATIONS
WELL... IT'S BEEN PRETTY TOUGH...

MY PATIENCE WILL NOT LAST UNTIL THE CRUSADE IS OVER.
HOW LONG WILL YOU MAKE ME WAIT?
.....
HAAH...
IF YOU CAN'T BRING ME HIS THIRD RELIC BY THEN...
...until Tsuzuki meets with Arcana.
YOUR TIME LIMIT IS... LET ME SEE... YES...
...OUR AGREEMENT, THAT I UNDO YOUR MIXED-RACE CURSE...
...IS NULL AND VOID.

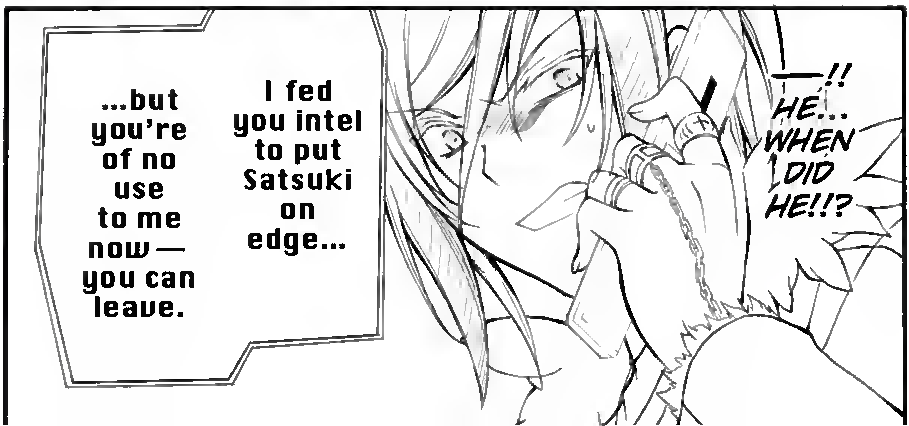
BY THE TIME THEY MEET...? THAT'LL BE A PIECE OF CAKE NOW.
PARIN (KLINK)
PAKI (SNAP)
IMPERIAL EDICT: UNLOCK.
EN: CROACH. REMOVE IMPEDI-MENT.
BAN (SLAM)
GA (GRAB)

HA...! SEE...!
I WILL SURVIVE AFTER ALL!!

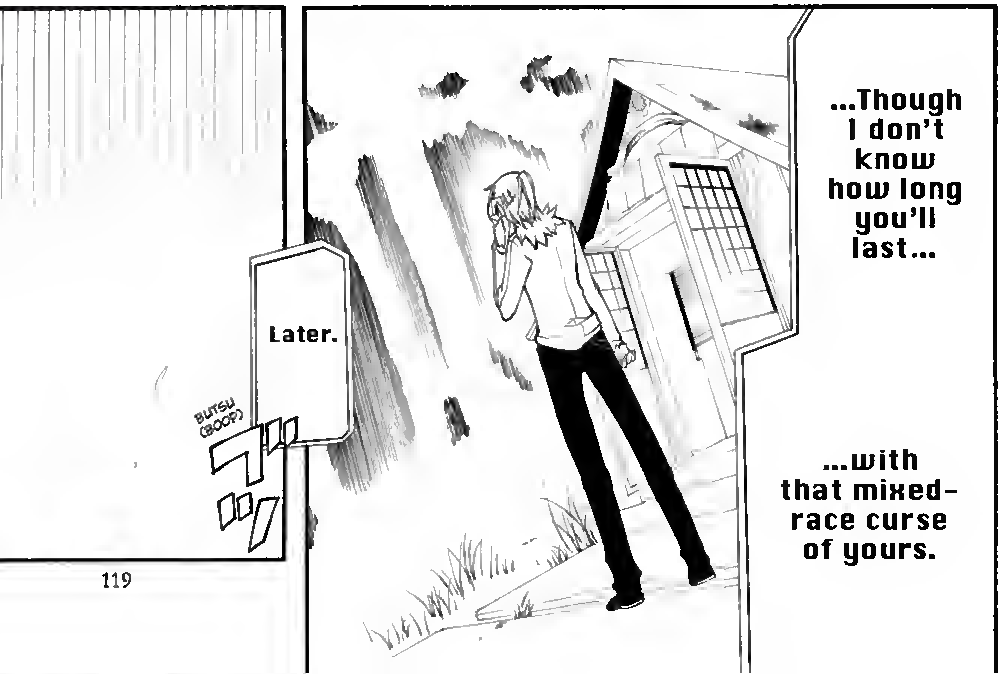
NOW SATSUKI WILL UNDO MY CURSE...
...AND I'LL BE FREE ...!
HA HA ...
AH HA HA HA !!

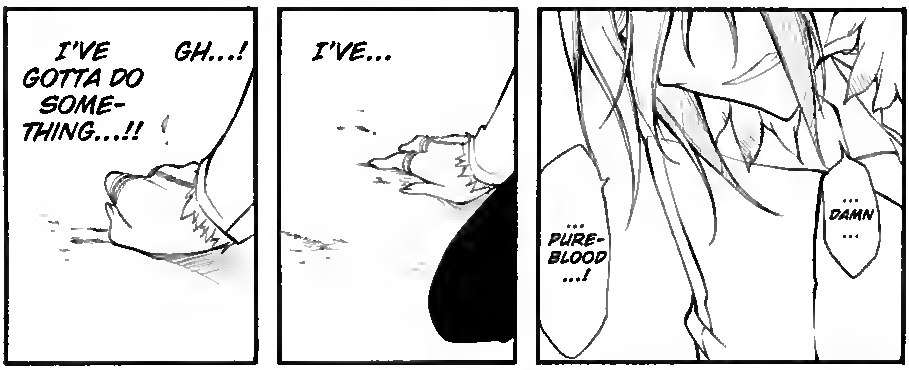
HA...
PLL
!
...IT'S TSUZUKI.
TCH
PI (BEEP)
YES?
Yo! Are you being a good watch-dog?
OF COURSE, LORD PURE-BLOOD.
Yeah? Good, good.
...I OUGHTA THANK THIS DUNCE OF A GOD CANDIDATE...
BY THE WAY...
...you should probably know — that Third Relic I left with you?
It's a fake.
....HUH?

ZAAA (FSHHH)
I'm disap-point-ed...
...THAT YOU'RE A SPY.


I fed you intel to put Satsuki on edge...
...but you're of no use to me now — you can leave.
—!! HE... WHEN DID HE!?

...I'LL KILL YOU.
...WHEN I GET BACK FROM THIS DEAL...
...IF I FIND YOU STILL LOITERING AROUND...
OH, AND ...
Well ... but ...
...I bet even if you go grovelling to Satsuki...
...he'll kill you too.
YOU MIGHT ESCAPE WITH YOUR LIFE.
YOU PROBABLY OUGHT TO JUST RUN.


Later.
BUTSU (BOOP)
...Though I don't know how long you'll last...
...with that mixed-race curse of yours.

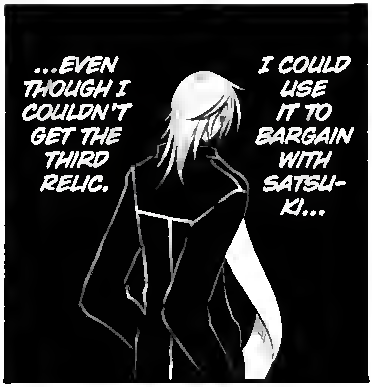

I'VE GOTTA DO SOME-THING...!!
GH...!
I'VE...
... PURE-BLOOD ...!
... DAMN ...

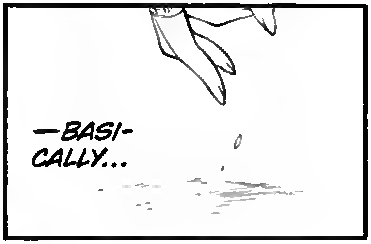
...OH!

...MENTIONED SOME KIND OF "ANTI-ANGEL RELIC."
TSUZUKI...
ARCANA HAS AN ANTI-ANGEL RELIC
DO NOT ENGAGE

AND IT WOULD BE A USEFUL ITEM FOR SATSUKI TO HAVE IN THE CRUSADES.
IF I STEAL THAT, ARCANA MIGHT ABORT THEIR DEAL WITH TSUZUKI.

...IF I OBTAIN THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC...
...I CAN GO ON TO LIVE ANOTHER DAY...!!
GYU (CLENCH)

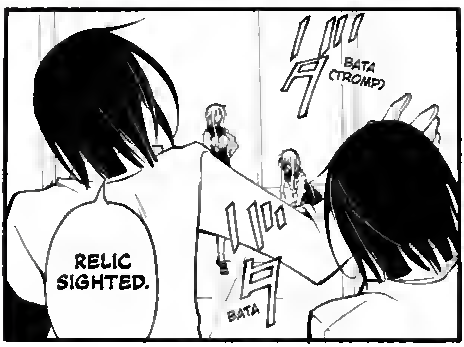

...EVEN THOUGH I COULDN'T GET THE THIRD RELIC.
I COULD USE IT TO BARGAIN WITH SATSUKI...


—BASICALLY...

EEK!
DOON
(BOOM)
HEE HEE! TSUZUKI'S CREDIBILITY IS IN THE MUD NOW!
HA HA! LOTS ARE CHASING AFTER ME NOW!
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO GET THIS RELIC TO SATSU-KI—
MRAH !?

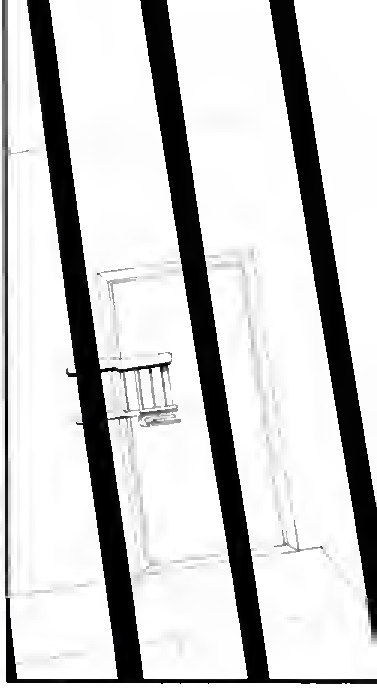
ACK!
AH!
THE RELIC ...!
KAN CLATTER
...
OHH ...?
SO THIS IS A DIVINE RELIC, HMM?
GA GRAB

THEN I THINK I'LL HANG ON TO IT.


BATA (TROMP)
RELIC SIGHTED.
BATA

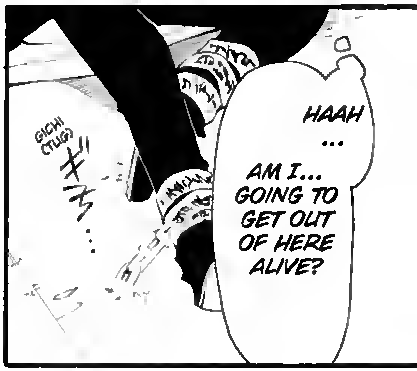
THE REAL ONE!
GAH ...!

OH.
QUITE THE PARTY.
SEEING HOW SERIOUSLY YOU'RE CHASING AFTER HER...
...THIS RELIC...MUST BE PRETTY IMPORTANT.
SO ...?
THIS ...
...WHAT IS IT EXACTLY?

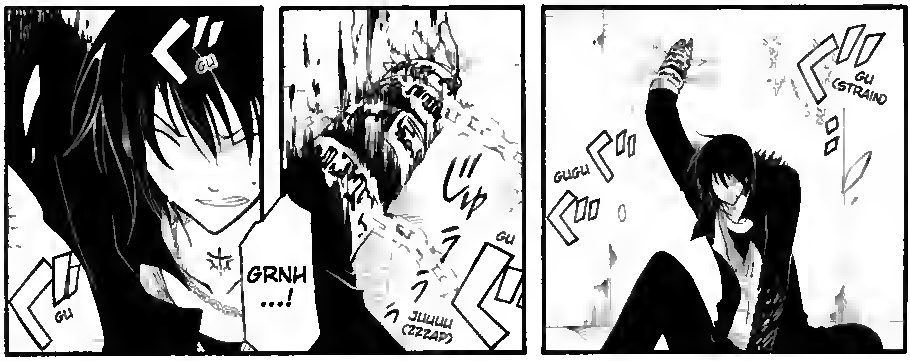


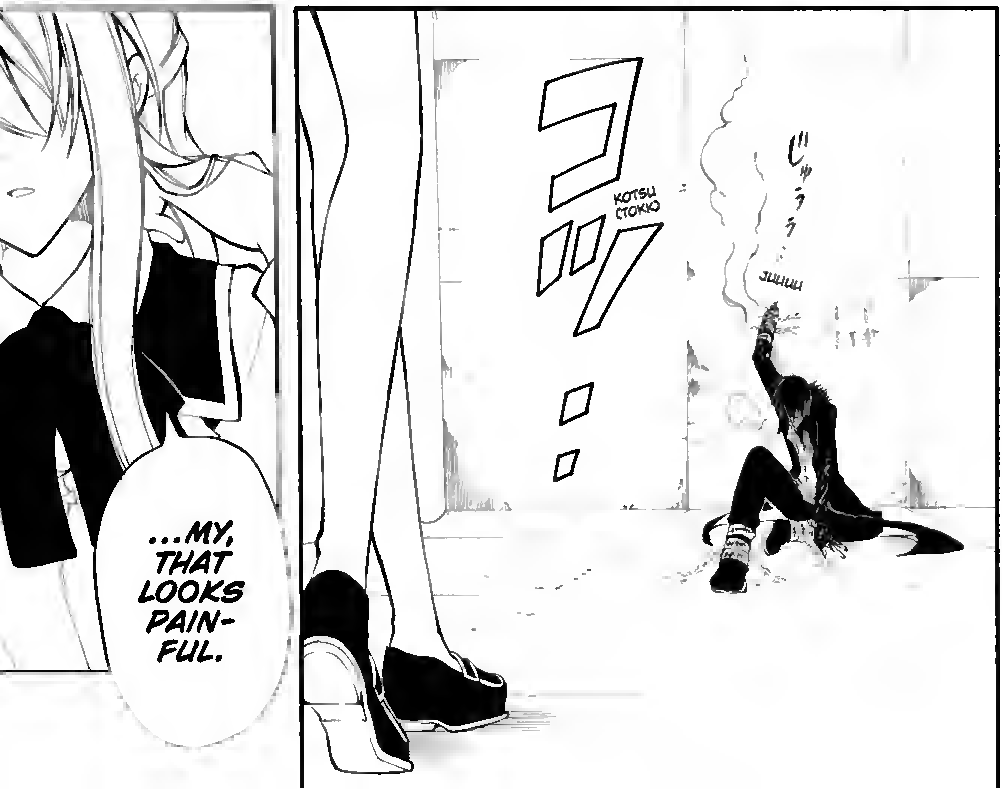
THESE SPELL PAPERS... I CAN'T FREE MY RIGHT ARM...
...DAM-MIT...

HE HAS TO WIN THIS ROUND OF THE CRUSADE...
WELL...AT LEAST I LET TSUZUKI KNOW ABOUT THE RELIC...

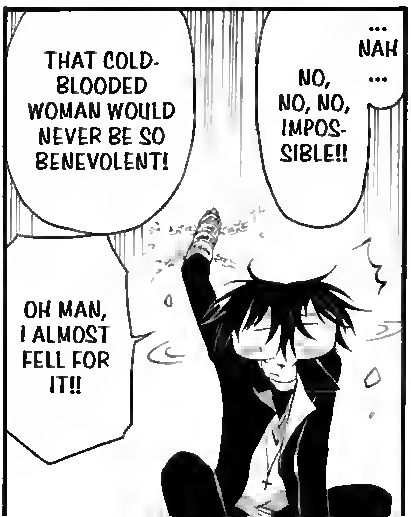

GIGHI GTUGI
HAAH...
AM I... GOING TO GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE?

THOUGH I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FEEL MY LEFT HAND FOR A WHILE...
NOW...IF I CAN JUST ESCAPE THIS PLACE, IT'LL REALLY BE CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION...

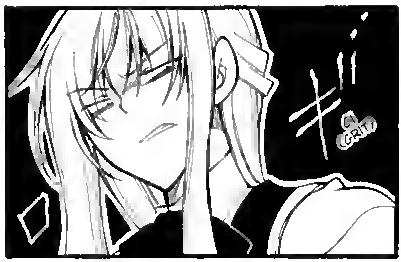

GU
GRNH ...!
JUUUU (ZZZAP)
GU
GUGU
GU (STRAIN)


...MY, THAT LOOKS PAIN-FUL.
KOTSU (TOKK)
JUUUU

NEED SOME HELP?


... NAH ...
NO, NO, NO, IMPOS-SIBLE!!
THAT COLD-BLOODED WOMAN WOULD NEVER BE SO BENEVOLENT!
OH MAN, I ALMOST FELL FOR IT!!

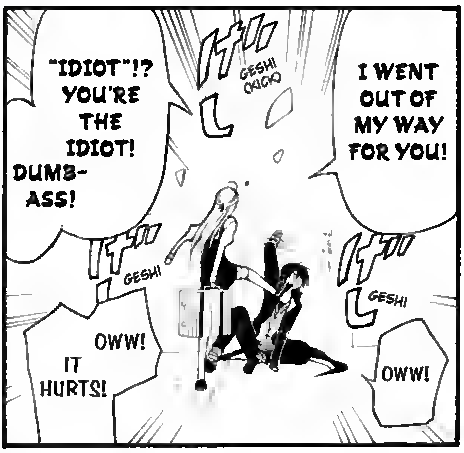
... HUH!?
TSU-KI...


CRAT

...HUH!?

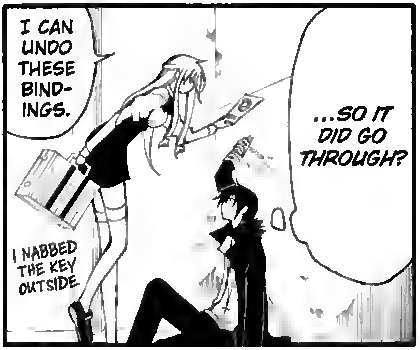
...THAT CAT IN DIS-GUISE, AREN'T YOU?
YOU'RE ...
YOU AIN'T FOOLING ME, YA MANGY AIR-HEAD.

I CAME HERE 'COS I HAD A MISSED CALL!
YOU CALLED ME, DIDN'T YOU?
!

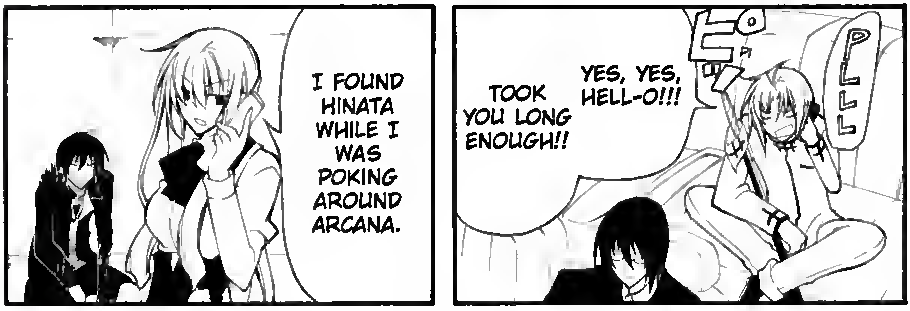

"IDIOT"!? YOU'RE THE IDIOT! DUMB-ASS!
I WENT OUT OF MY WAY FOR YOU!
GESHI
GESHI
GESHI
OWW! IT HURTS!
OWW!

...OH!

BASHU (SHHP)


I CAN UNDO THESE BIND-INGS.
...SO IT DID GO THROUGH?
I NABBED THE KEY OUTSIDE.

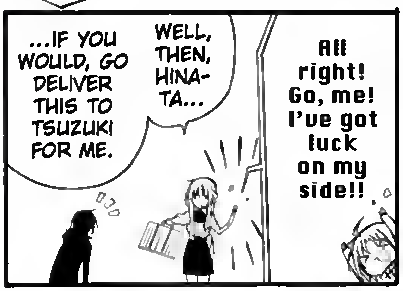
...H-
HEY! THAT'S...
(BEEP)
...THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC!!
SHH! SHUT UP!
I'M TRYING TO MAKE A CALL.


I FOUND HINATA WHILE I WAS POKING AROUND ARCANA.
YES, YES, HELL-O!!!
TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH!!

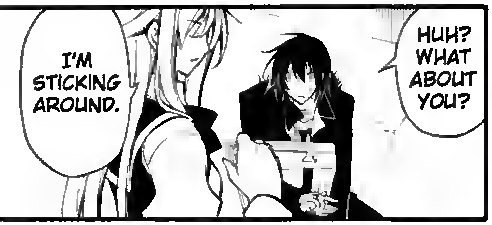
!!
WHAT ...?
FOR REAL!?

AND...
...I GOT AHOLD OF SOME "ANTI-ANGEL RELIC" TOO.

Hey, about that Relic...
...don't hand it over to either Arcana or Satsuki!
No matter what!!
UH, WHY DON'T I JUST BRING IT TO YOU?
WOULDN'T IT BE SAFEST FOR YOU TO HANG ON TO IT?
PLUS IT'D BE A PAIN FOR ME TO TRY AND PROTECT IT
!


All right! Go, me! I've got luck on my side!!
WELL, THEN, HINA-TA...
...IF YOU WOULD, GO DELIVER THIS TO TSUZUKI FOR ME.

...YEAH!
AND THEN I CAN MEET WITH THEM WITHOUT HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT IT!!

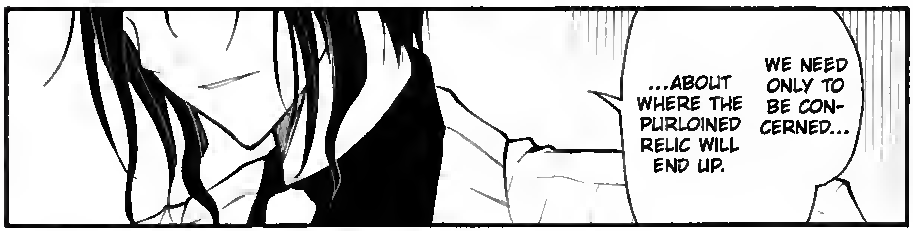

HUH? WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I'M STICKING AROUND.

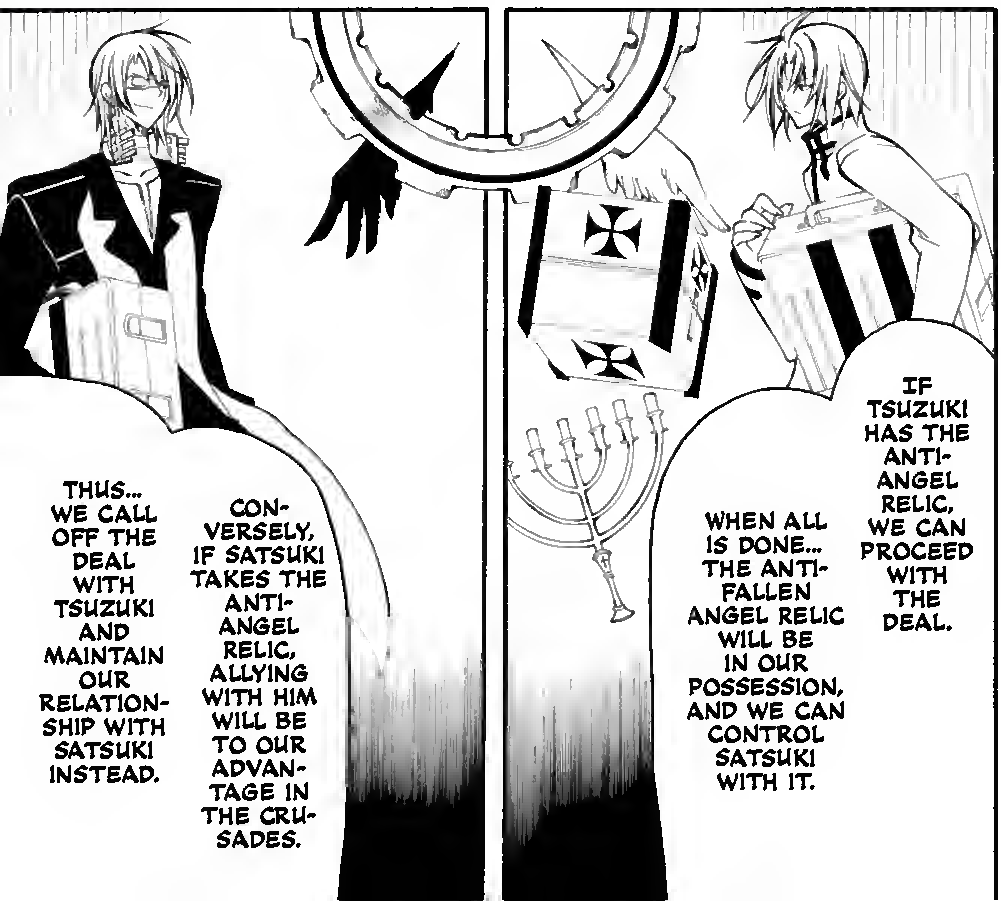
SO GREE-DY.

SOME-WHERE AROUND HERE... THEY'VE STASHED THE OTHER HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC, RIGHT?
IT'D BE A WASTE TO LEAVE WITHOUT TAKING IT TOO, RIGHT?
NIKO (SMILE)

...WELL, AT LEAST I'VE PUT OFF DYING...
...FOR NOW...
...HAAH.
...BUT I THINK I CAN TELE-PORT.
I CAN'T USE MY LEFT ARM...
÷OM÷
ZAA (ZSHH)
CON-VEY.
...ABOUT THAT ANTI-ANGEL RELIC...
ARE YOU CERTAIN WE SHOULDN'T HAVE WAITED THERE UNTIL IT WAS RETRIEVED?
BURORO (VRRRM)

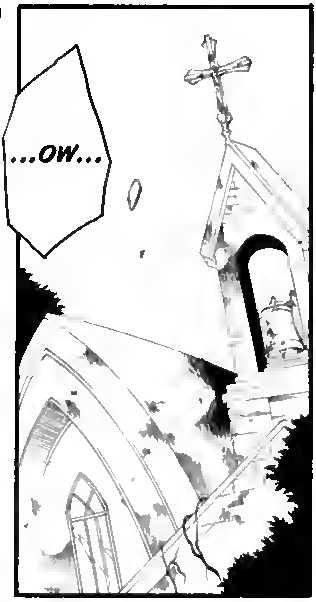
NO... TSUZUKI LIKELY KNOWS OF THE RELIC'S EXISTENCE BY NOW.
IT CAN'T BE USED TO HOODWINK HIM IF HE'S AWARE OF IT.
IT'S FINE.

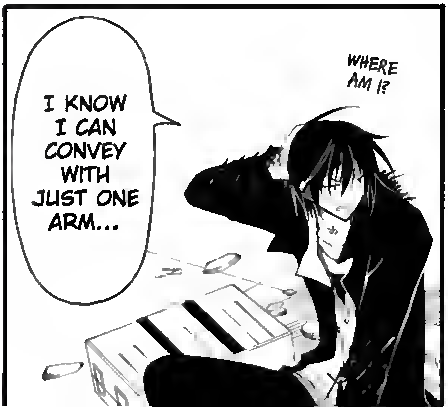

WE NEED ONLY TO BE CONCERNED...
...ABOUT WHERE THE PURLOINED RELIC WILL END UP.

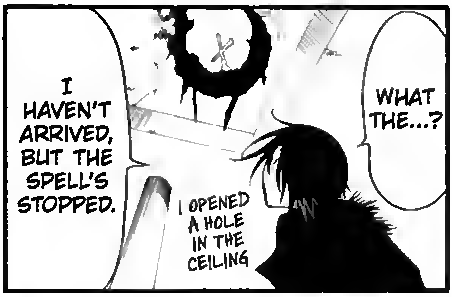

IF TSUZUKI HAS THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC, WE CAN PROCEED WITH THE DEAL.
WHEN ALL IS DONE... THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC WILL BE IN OUR POSSESSION, AND WE CAN CONTROL SATSUKI WITH IT.
CONVERSELY, IF SATSUKI TAKES THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC, ALLYING WITH HIM WILL BE TO OUR ADVANTAGE IN THE CRUSADES.
THUS... WE CALL OFF THE DEAL WITH TSUZUKI AND MAINTAIN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH SATSUKI INSTEAD.

...TO HELP US DETER-MINE OUR NEXT MOVE.
...THAT RELIC IS JUST BAIT...

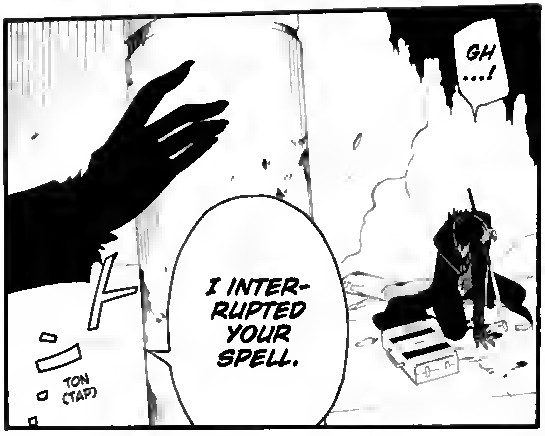
OWW!!


...OW...


I KNOW I CAN CONVEY WITH JUST ONE ARM...
WHERE AM I?


I HAVEN'T ARRIVED, BUT THE SPELL'S STOPPED.
I OPENED A HOLE IN THE CEILING
WHAT THE...?

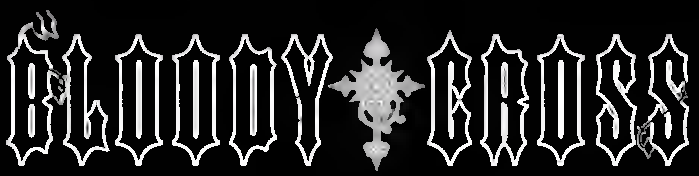
DO (STAB)


GH ...!
I INTER-RUPTED YOUR SPELL.
TON (TAP)

AH...

THAT'S ...
...THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC, RIGHT?

I'M TAKING THAT RELIC...
...SO THAT I CAN SUR-VIVE.


BLOODY CROSS

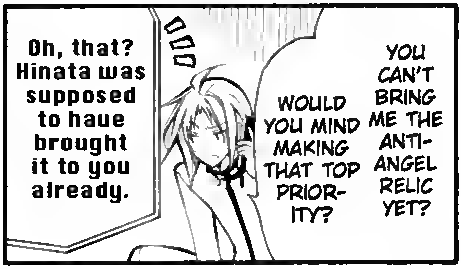
BLOODY CROSS

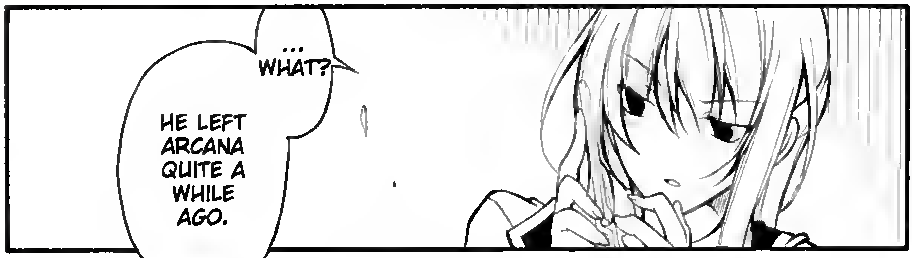
IT WON'T BE LONG NOW...
WE'LL ARRIVE AT THE MEETING POINT WITH ARCANA SOON.
VUROOM (VROOM)
FIFTEEN MINUTES UNTIL THE DEAL... HUH.

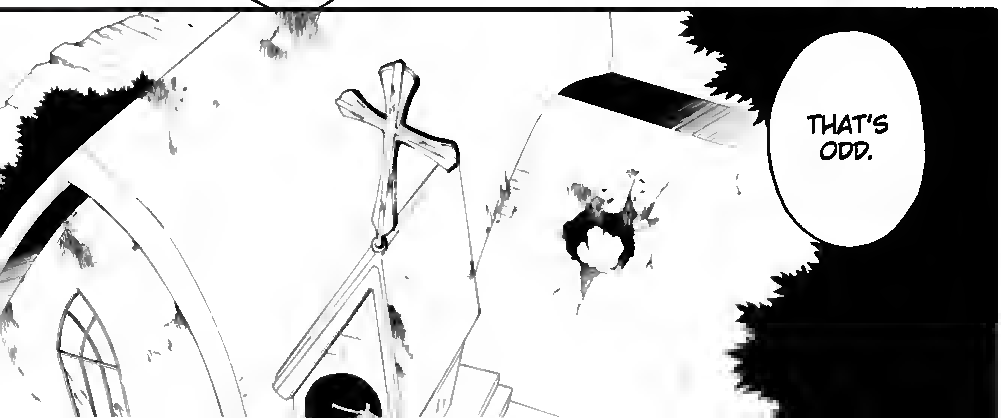
IF I CAN OBTAIN THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC, MY VICTORY IS CERTAIN...
ANTI-ANGEL AND ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL— BOTH MINE!
GOTTA GET THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC
CAN'T TOUCH HIM
...AND ARCANA...WHO WANTS THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC IN CASE THEY END UP SPLITSVILLE WITH SATSUKI!...
...WILL HAVE TO EXCHANGE RELICS WITH ME.
FEELS GOOD WHEN THINGS ARE GOING YOUR WAY.
BOSU (PWUMP)
NICE!
...IT WOULD BE INCONVENIENT FOR US IF EITHER ARCANA OR SATSUKI POSSESSED IT.
...WELL, EVEN MORE THAN THAT...
I AM GOING TO WIN.
AND THE KEY, THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC, IS PRACTICALLY MINE.
PLL
...BUT NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT ANY-MORE.
YEAH ...
...OR OTHER-WISE HINDER US IN FUTURE CRU-SADES.
THEY COULD PRES-SURE US DURING THIS DEAL...

I'M ...
...LOOKING FOR THE OTHER PIECE OF THE THIRD RELIC RIGHT NOW.
IT MAY TAKE ME A LITTLE LONGER TO GET BACK.

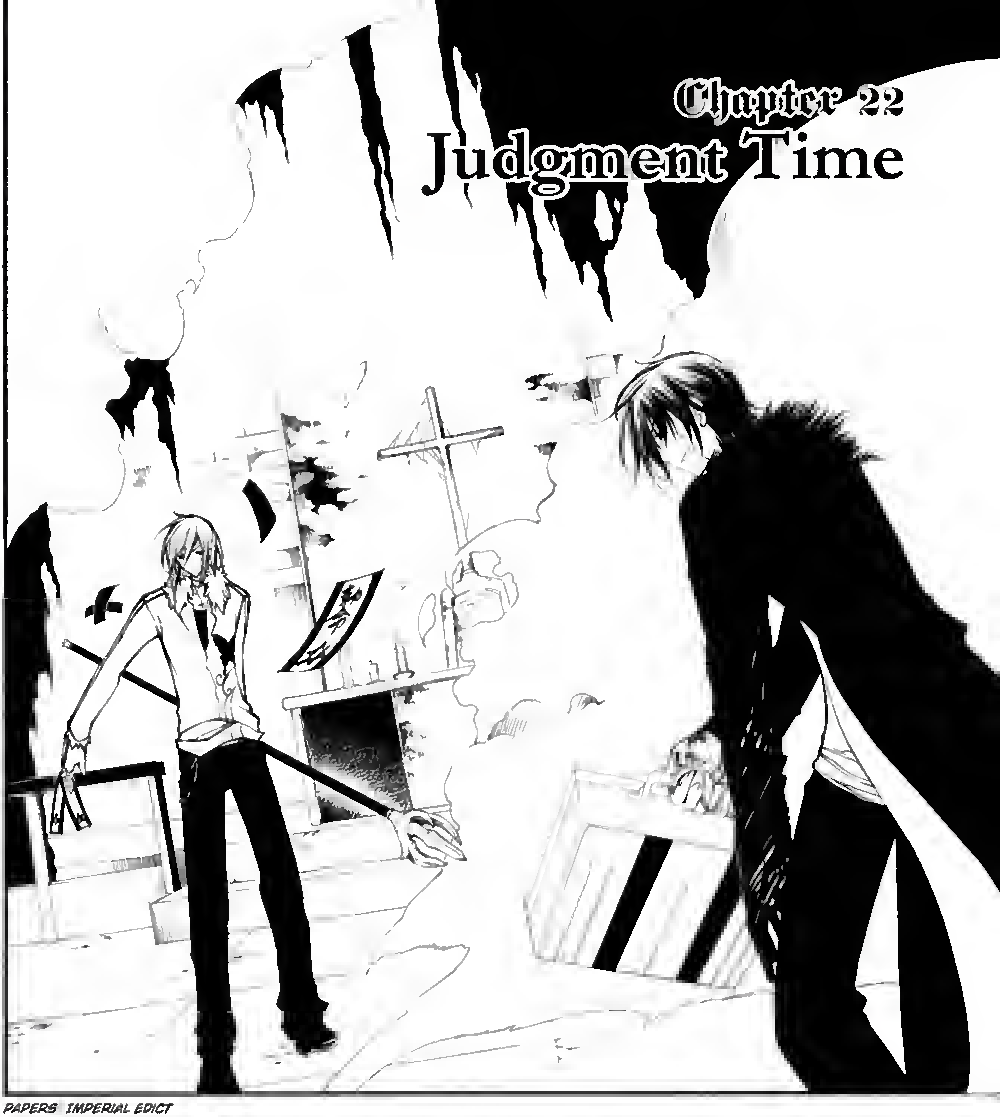
...HUH?
BUT ...
...HE HASN'T SHOWN UP YET.


YOU CAN'T BRING ME THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC YET?
WOULD YOU MIND MAKING THAT TOP PRIOR-ITY?
Oh, that? Hinata was supposed to haue brought it to you already.


...WHAT?
HE LEFT ARCANA QUITE A WHILE AGO.


THAT'S ODD.

Chapter 22
Judgment Time



PAPERS IMPERIAL EDICT

TCH ...!
:OM:
PRO-TECH
MANI—
ZURU (SLIP)
UNH !!
ZUKI (PANG)
TO (LUNGE)
I COULDN'T USE A SPELL EVEN IF I WANTED TO.
MY LEFT ARM IS NUMB, AND MY RIGHT WON'T WORK ...!
GH!
DAM-MIT...

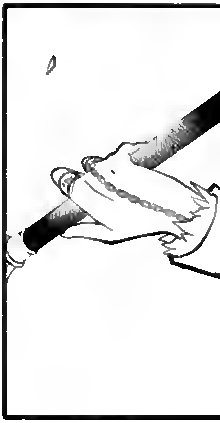
I...

...HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE...!
DA (DASH)

I CAN'T PUT UP ANY KIND OF A FIGHT LIKE THIS!

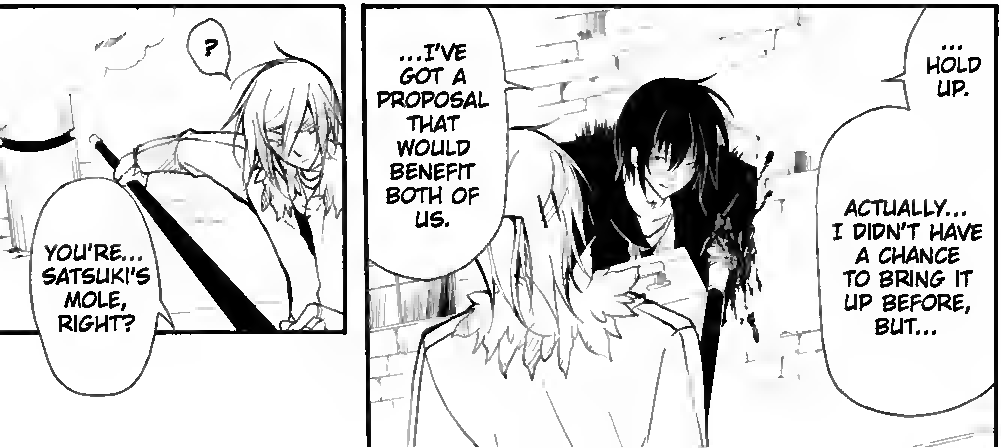
AGH ...!

DO (SLAM)

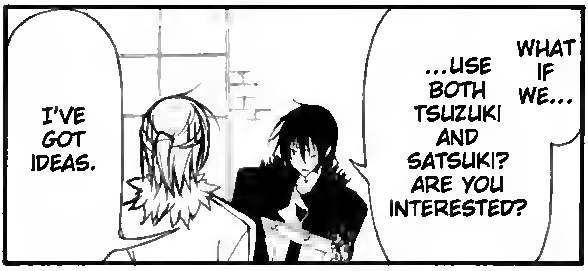


GA (KRRK)
...LEAVE THAT ANTI-ANGEL RELIC BEHIND.
IF YOU'VE GOTTA RUN...

TCH ...

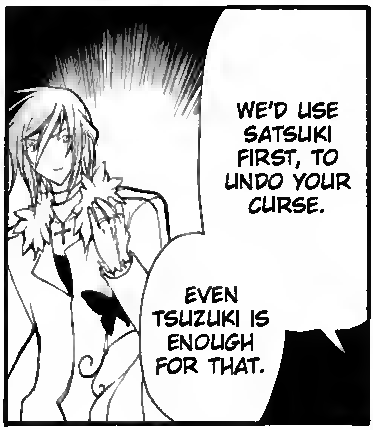

?
YOU'RE... SATSUKI'S MOLE, RIGHT?
...I'VE GOT A PROPOSAL THAT WOULD BENEFIT BOTH OF US.
... HOLD UP.
ACTUALLY... I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO BRING IT UP BEFORE, BUT...

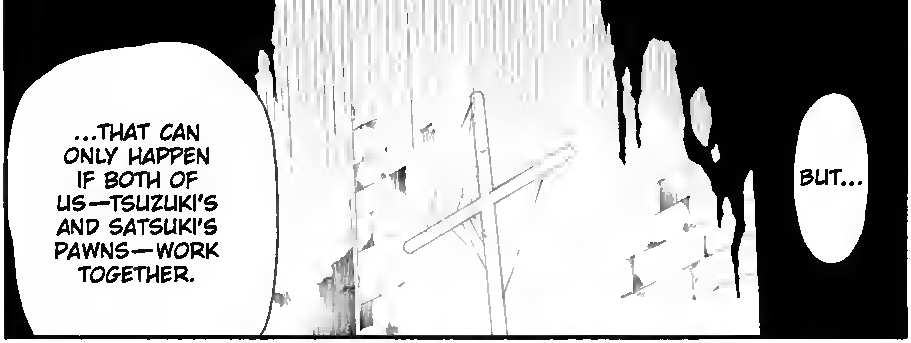
WHAT ABOUT PART-NERING WITH ME...
...AND MAKING AN ALLI-ANCE OF SPIES?

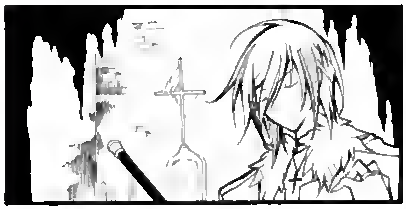

I'VE GOT IDEAS.
...USE BOTH TSUZUKI AND SATSUKI? ARE YOU INTERESTED?
WHAT IF WE...

WHAT ...?

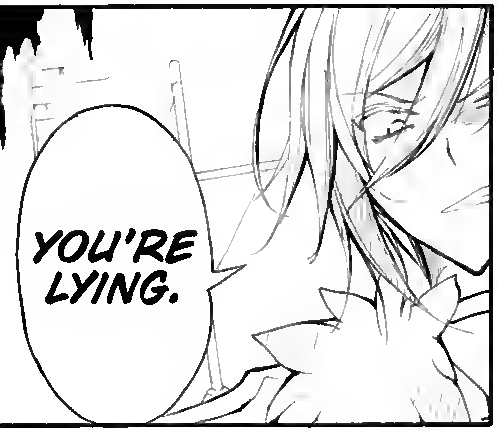
... THEN ...
...WE CAN MOVE ON TO STEALING ALL THE DIVINE RELICS THEY'VE GOT.
ONCE WE'VE MADE SURE YOU'LL BE AROUND FOR A WHILE YET...

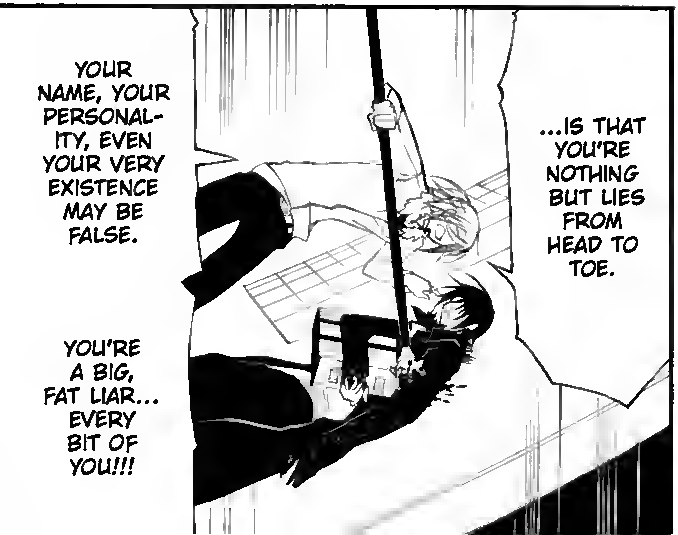

WE'D USE SATSUKI FIRST, TO UNDO YOUR CURSE.
EVEN TSUZUKI IS ENOUGH FOR THAT.


BUT...
...THAT CAN ONLY HAPPEN IF BOTH OF US—TSUZUKI'S AND SATSUKI'S PAWNS—WORK TOGETHER.

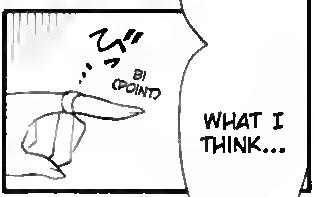


I THINK...
...IT'S A PRETTY GOOD DEAL.


YOU'RE LYING.


YOUR NAME, YOUR PERSONALITY, EVEN YOUR VERY EXISTENCE MAY BE FALSE.
YOU'RE A BIG, FAT LIAR... EVERY BIT OF YOU!!!
...IS THAT YOU'RE NOTHING BUT LIES FROM HEAD TO TOE.

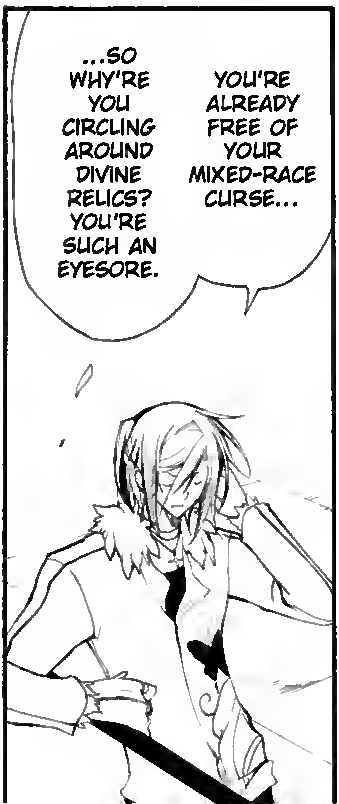
...!
AS IF THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.

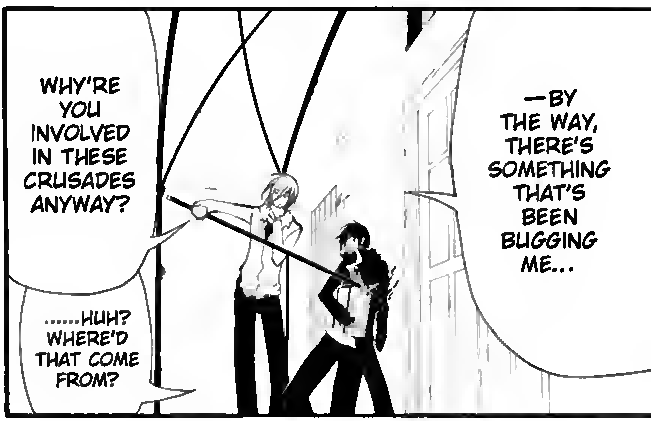

BI (POINT)
WHAT I THINK...

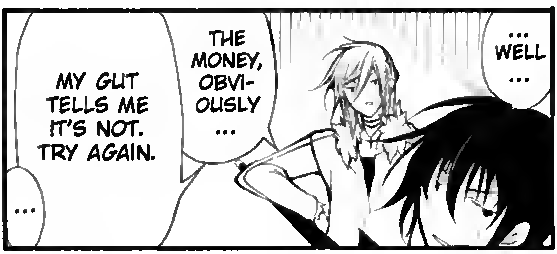
TELL ME I'M WRONG.
...THAT'S HOW I SEE IT.

YEAH ?

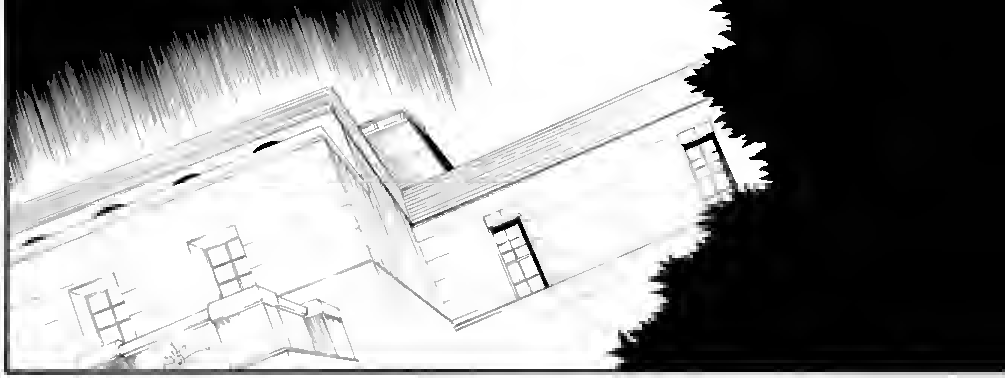
YOU'RE TOTALLY OFF.
THAT'S NOT...


...SO WHY'RE YOU CIRCLING AROUND DIVINE RELICS? YOU'RE SUCH AN EYESORE.
YOU'RE ALREADY FREE OF YOUR MIXED-RACE CURSE...


WHY'RE YOU INVOLVED IN THESE CRUSADES ANYWAY?
.....HUH? WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
—BY THE WAY, THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN BUGGING ME...

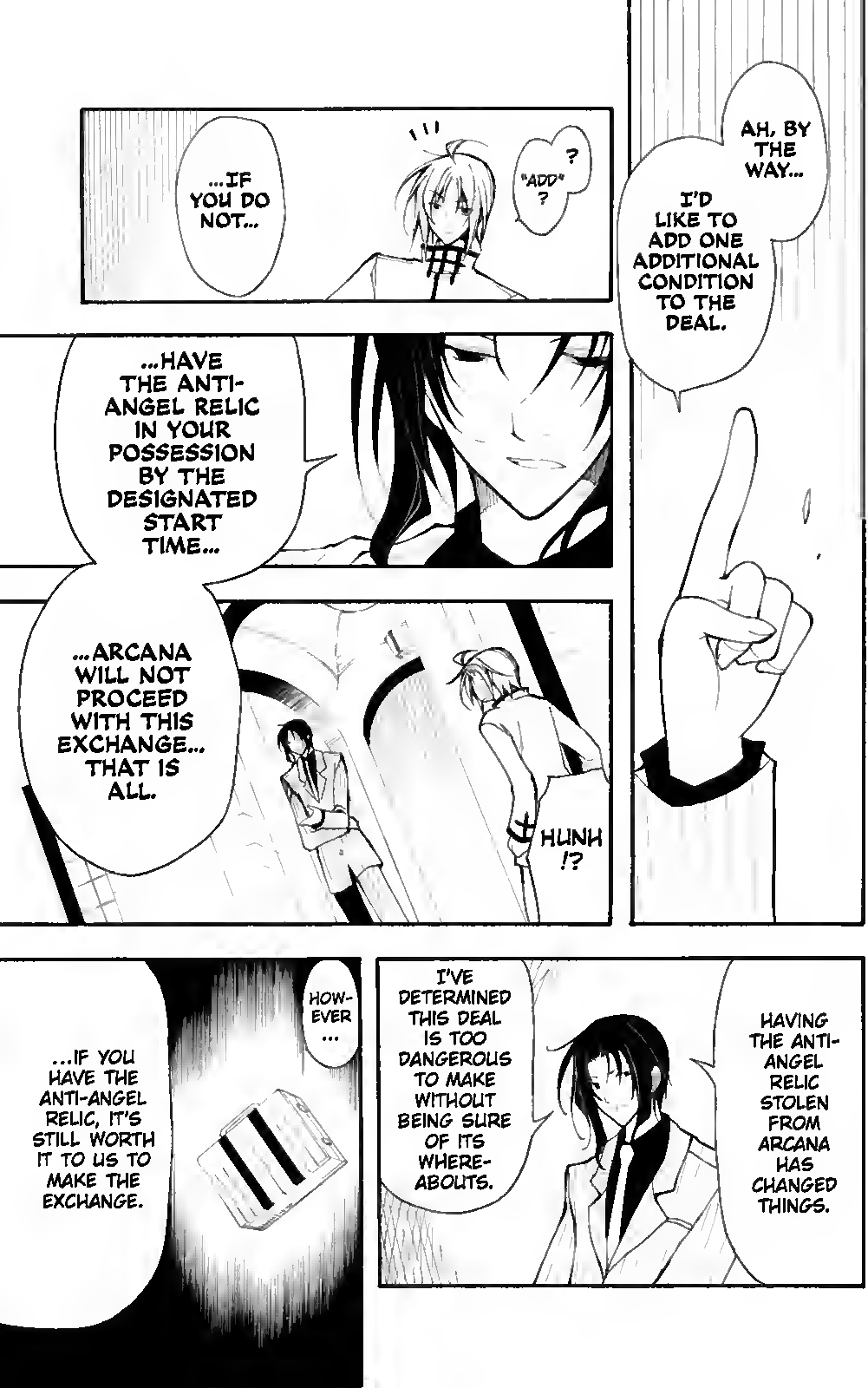

MY GUT TELLS ME IT'S NOT. TRY AGAIN.
...
THE MONEY, OBVIOUSLY ...
... WELL ...

JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT, I'LL TELL YOU WHY I'M DOING THIS.
TCH... FINE.
...DAMN, WHAT A PAIN.
WHY'S EVERYONE SO INTERESTED IN GOSSIPING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS?
HAH!
I...
...DESPISE THAT FALLEN ANGEL SATSUKI. I'M DOING THIS TO SCREW WITH HIS PLANS.
...YOU KNOW, I'D APPRECIATE IT...
GURI (TWIST)
GN... AH!
...IF YOU'D QUIT IT WITH THE JOKING AROUND...
AND BEG FOR YOUR LIFE OR SOMETHING...
...BAD GUY.



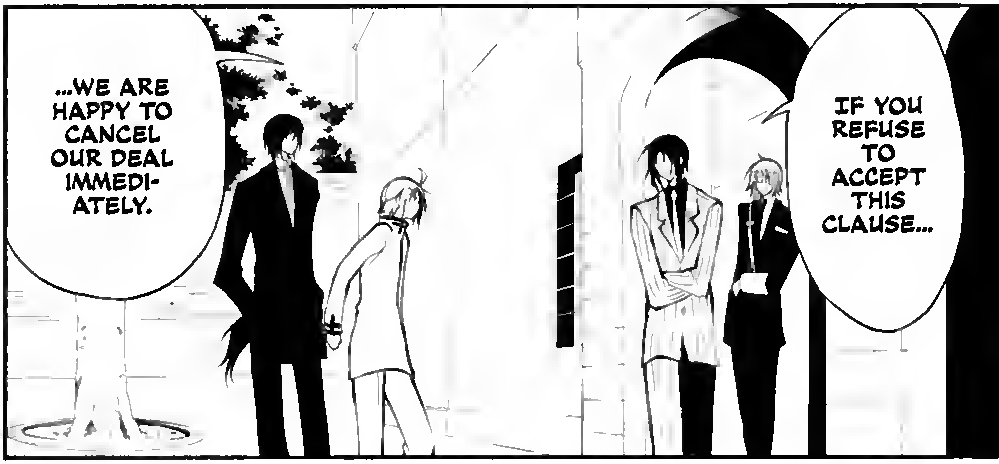
BAN
(GLAND)

GOOD EVE-NING.
THERE'S STILL ABOUT TEN MINUTES LEFT BEFORE THE AGREED-UPON TIME.
BOTH PARTIES ARE ASSEMBLED, BUT...I STILL FEEL IT BEST TO MAKE THE EXCHANGE ON THE DOT.
SURE, THAT'S FINE BY ME.
I'LL FEEL BETTER ONCE THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC HAS ARRIVED TOO.


AH, BY THE WAY...
I'D LIKE TO ADD ONE ADDITIONAL CONDITION TO THE DEAL.
"ADD"?
...IF YOU DO NOT...
...HAVE THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC IN YOUR POSSESSION BY THE DESIGNATED START TIME...
...ARCANA WILL NOT PROCEED WITH THIS EXCHANGE... THAT IS ALL.
HUNH!?
HAVING THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC STOLEN FROM ARCANA HAS CHANGED THINGS.
I'VE DETERMINED THIS DEAL IS TOO DANGEROUS TO MAKE WITHOUT BEING SURE OF ITS WHEREABOUTS.
HOWEVER...
...IF YOU HAVE THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC, IT'S STILL WORTH IT TO US TO MAKE THE EXCHANGE.

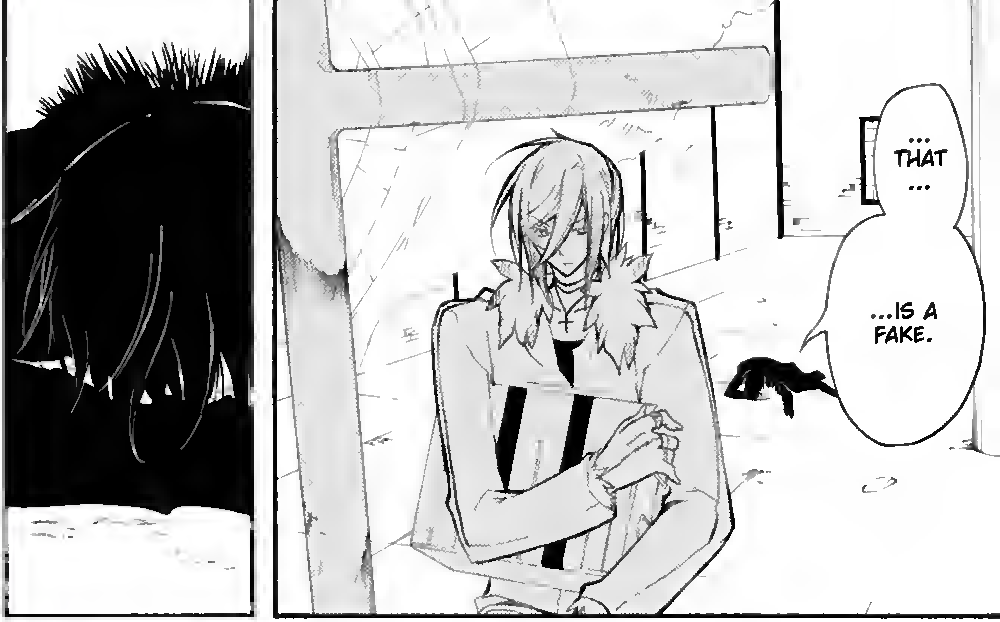
YOUR PEOPLE ARE THE ONES WHO CHANGED THE SITUATION, NOT OURS.

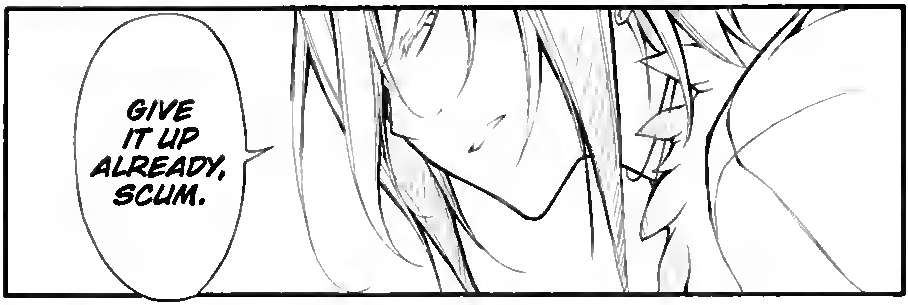
THAT'S PRETTY HIGH-HANDED THIS LATE IN THE GAME!


...WE ARE HAPPY TO CANCEL OUR DEAL IMMEDI-ATELY.
IF YOU REFUSE TO ACCEPT THIS CLAUSE...

GIRI GIRI?
WHAT ...!?

KA
(TAP)
KA
KA
HEH.
GA
(GRAB)
GEHO
(KOFF)
...HEY...
...JUST SO YOU KNOW...

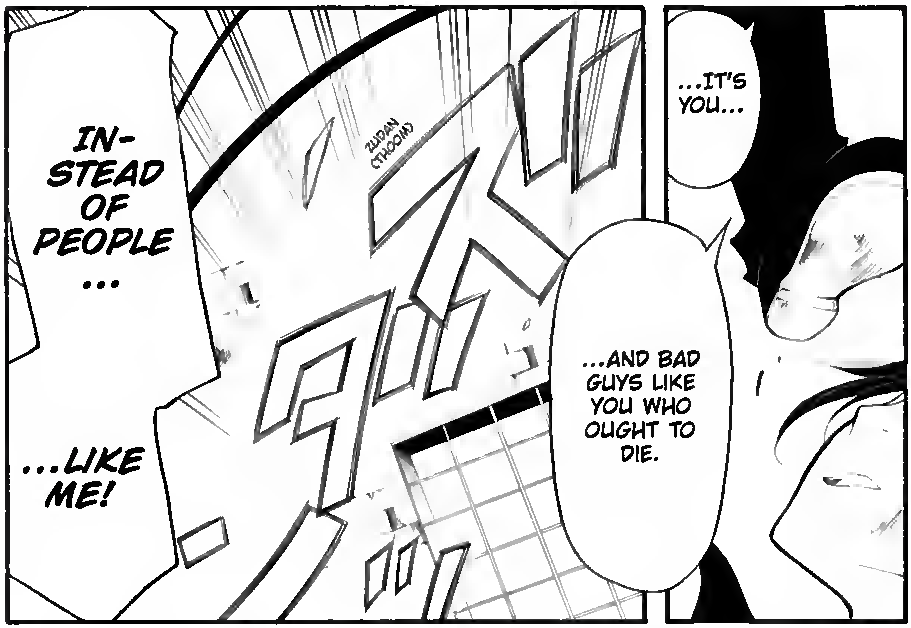

...
THAT
...
...IS A
FAKE.


GIVE
IT UP
ALREADY,
SCUM.

UGH
...
DAN
NO
OTHER
WAY...
THERE'S
NO OTHER
OPTION
FOR ME!!

GA
OKCHO

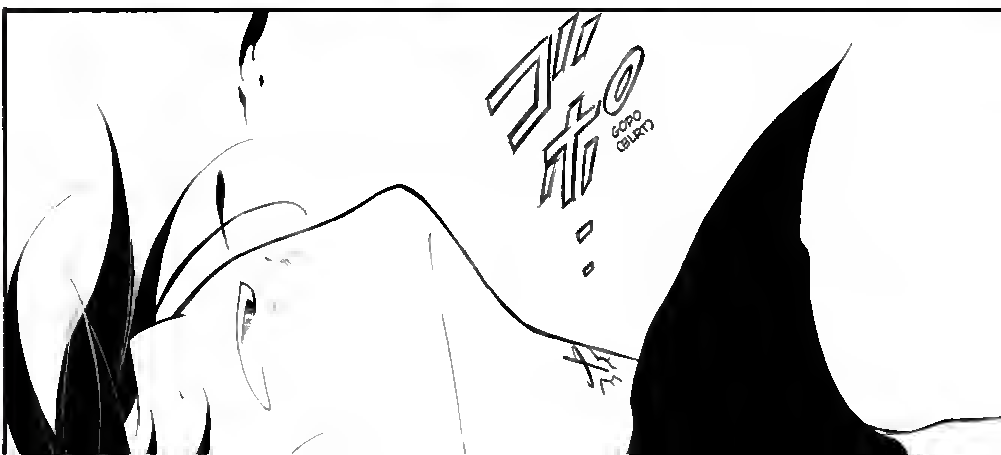
I WON'T HOLD BACK!
I! WILL! SURVIVE!!
GASU
GASU
GASU
GASU
GAH!
SO I...
...REFUSE TO FAIL!
AGH!
GASU (STOMP)


IN-STEAD OF PEOPLE ...
...LIKE ME!
ZUDAN (THOOM)
...IT'S YOU...
...AND BAD GUYS LIKE YOU WHO OUGHT TO DIE.

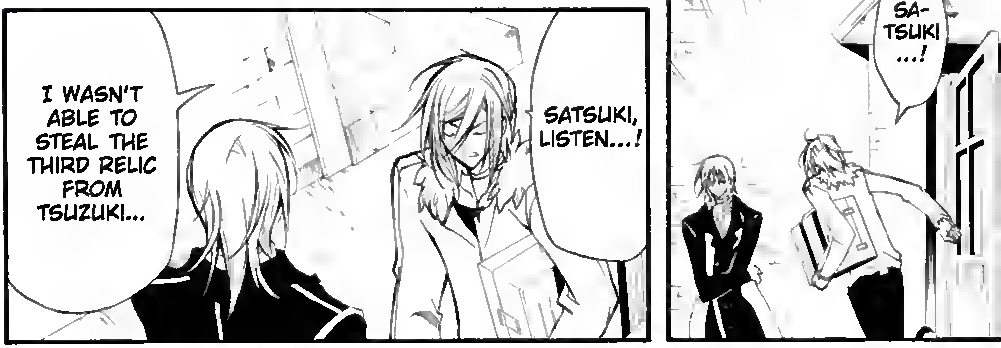
...PLEASE GRANT ME LIFE IN EXCHANGE FOR PASSING JUDGMENT UPON THIS EVILDOER.
O LORD ...

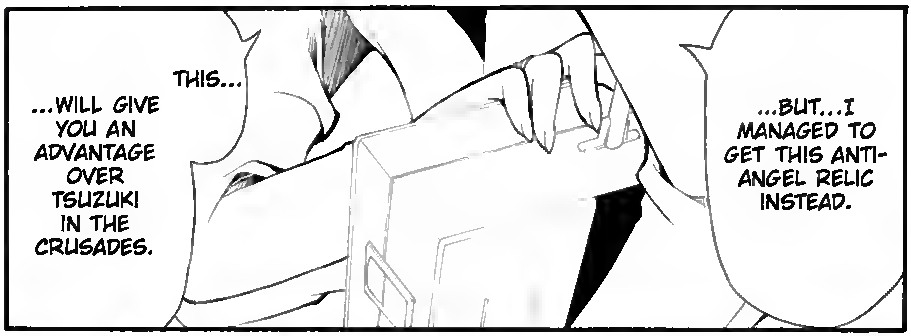
YEAH ...
HMM... THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.
.....
SHOULD DIE...

DO (STAB)
I HUMBLY BEG OF YOU!


ゴロ
GORO
GRRR

...IS TO GET THIS TO SATSUKI AS SOON AS I CAN...!!
ALL THAT'S LEFT...
THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC IS MINE.
カッ
GA (GRAB)
...I CAME CHASING AFTER THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC...
NAO.
...BUT I SEE YOU'VE OBTAINED IT.

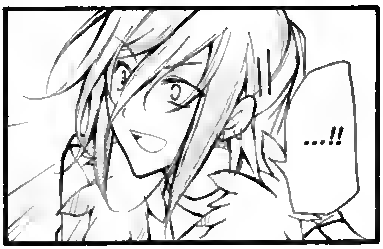

I WASN'T ABLE TO STEAL THE THIRD RELIC FROM TSUZUKI...
SATSUKI, LISTEN...!
SA-TSUKI ...!


...WILL GIVE YOU AN ADVANTAGE OVER TSUZUKI IN THE CRUSADES.
THIS...
...BUT...I MANAGED TO GET THIS ANTI-ANGEL RELIC INSTEAD.

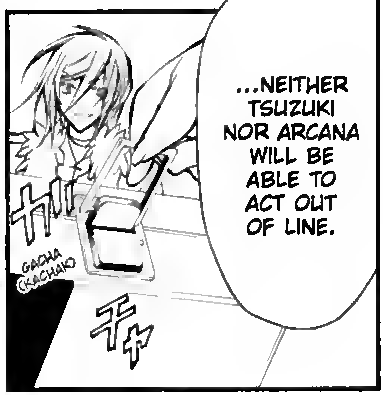
HEH...
I BEG YOU TO UNDO MY CURSE IN EXCHANGE!!
SO...
...PLEASE!

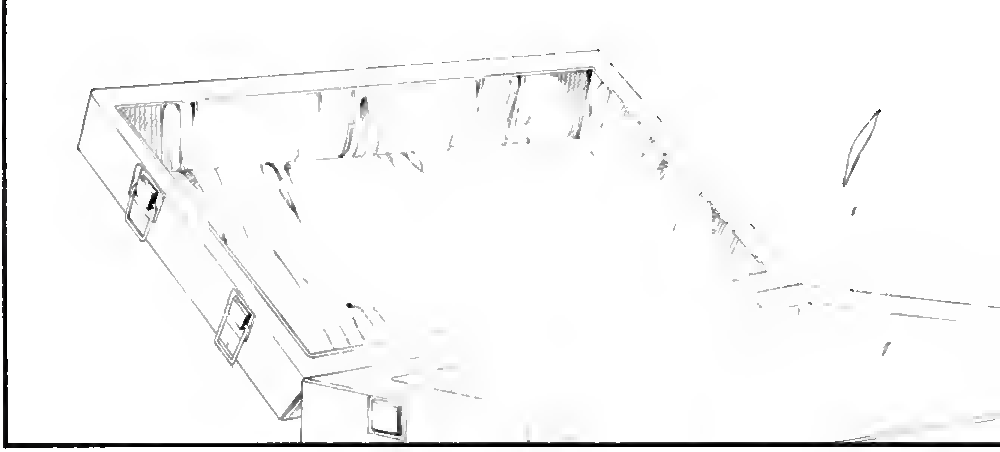
I'LL GRANT...
...YOUR WISH.
...FINE.

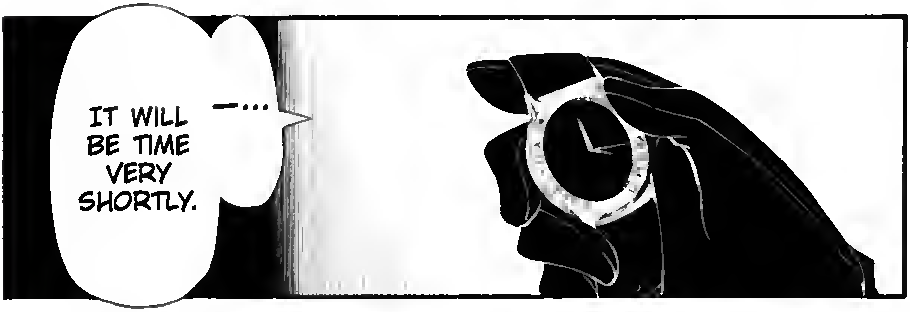
YES... FROM NOW ON...
GII (CREAK)
...THE CRUSADES WILL BE MY FIGHT TO WIN.


...!!

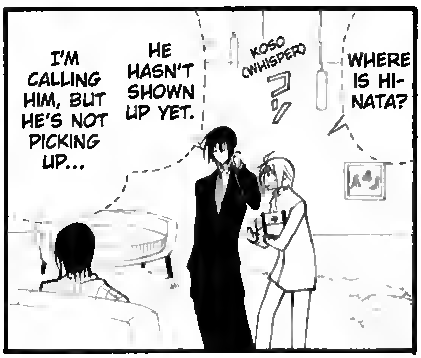
...WITH THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC IN MY HANDS...

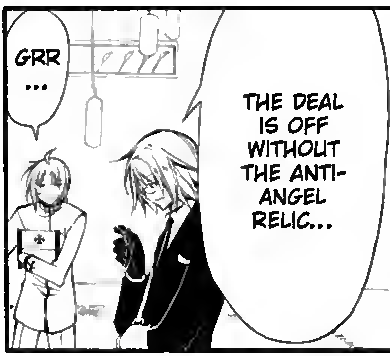

...NEITHER TSUZUKI NOR ARCANA WILL BE ABLE TO ACT OUT OF LINE.
GACHA (CLICK)




IT WILL BE TIME VERY SHORTLY.
—...

...DAM-MIT!


I'M CALLING HIM, BUT HE'S NOT PICKING UP...
HE HASN'T SHOWN UP YET.
KOSO (WHISPER)
?
WHERE IS HI-NATA?

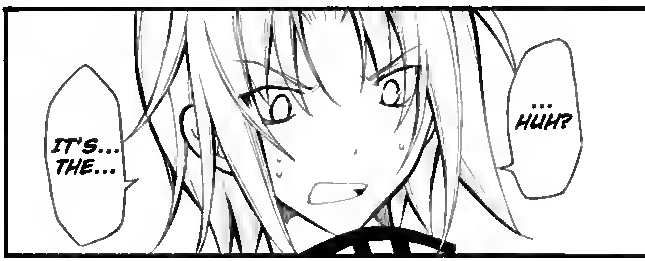

GRR...
THE DEAL IS OFF WITHOUT THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC...

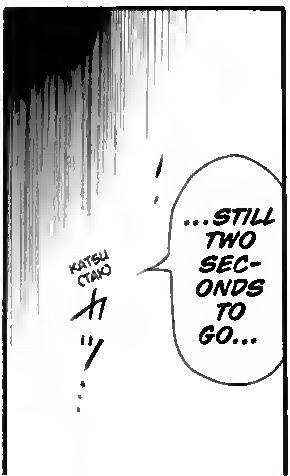
...IS SO CLOSE TO BEING MINE...!!
THE FOURTH RELIC...

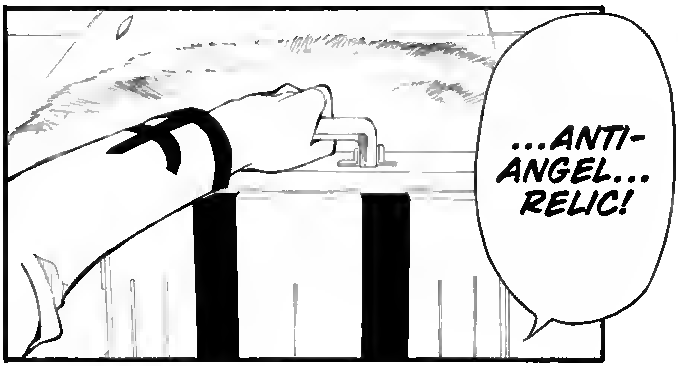
NOW 20...
...IT'S TOO BAD.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SUCH A GOOD TRADE, BUT...
ONLY THIRTY SECONDS LEFT.
...I'M AFRAID I HAVE TO...
DAM-MIT...!!!
10...
9...
8...
HHU (SIGH)
5...
4...
3...
2...

DOSA (WHUMP)

!!


IT'S... THE...
...HUH?

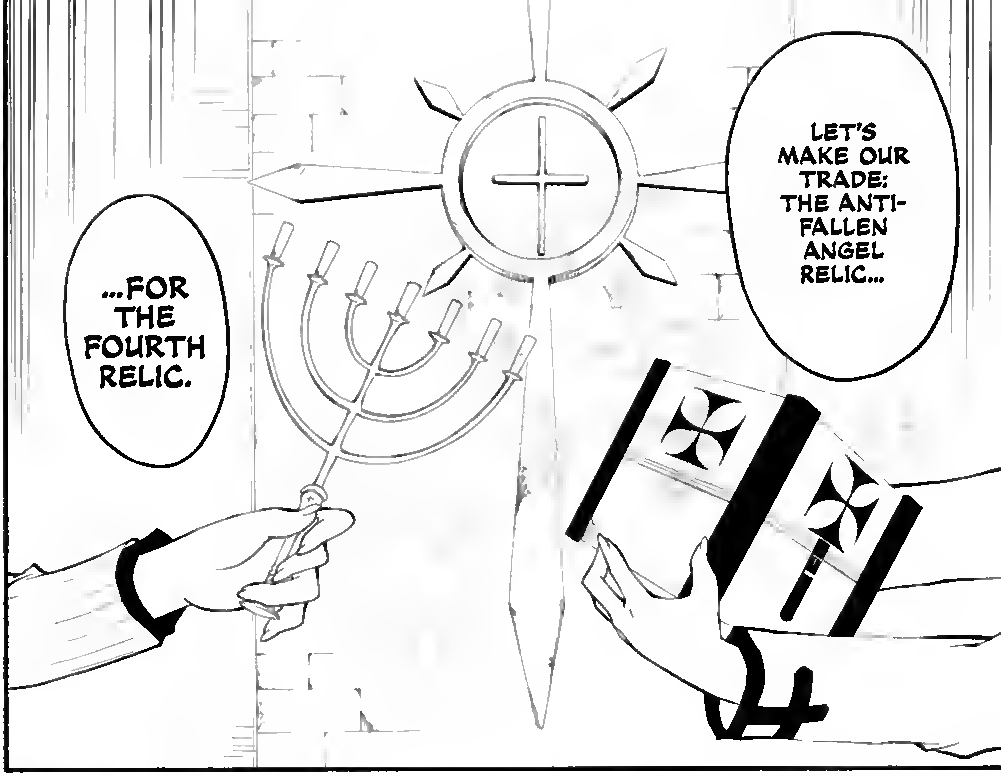

KATSU (TAK)
...STILL TWO SEC-ONDS TO GO...

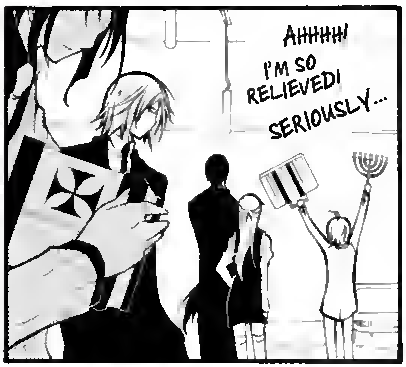

...ANTI-ANGEL... RELIC!

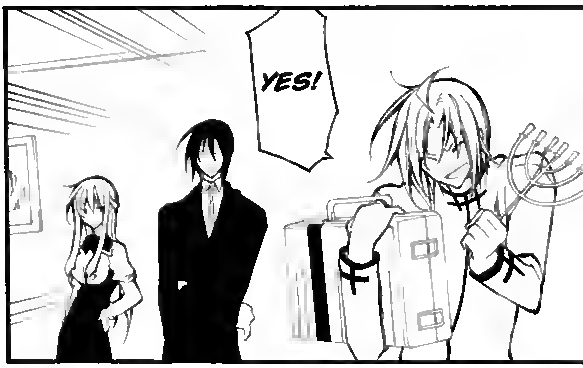
...AND ALREADY THIS DESPAIRING MOOD? HOW PREMATURE...
CONSIDERING...I BROUGHT YOU THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC.
HUH ...!?
HOLD ON... WHAT'S GOING ON...?
YOU'RE NOT HINATA!
OH...
...AND I'VE ALSO BROUGHT YOU...
...THE THIRD RELIC.

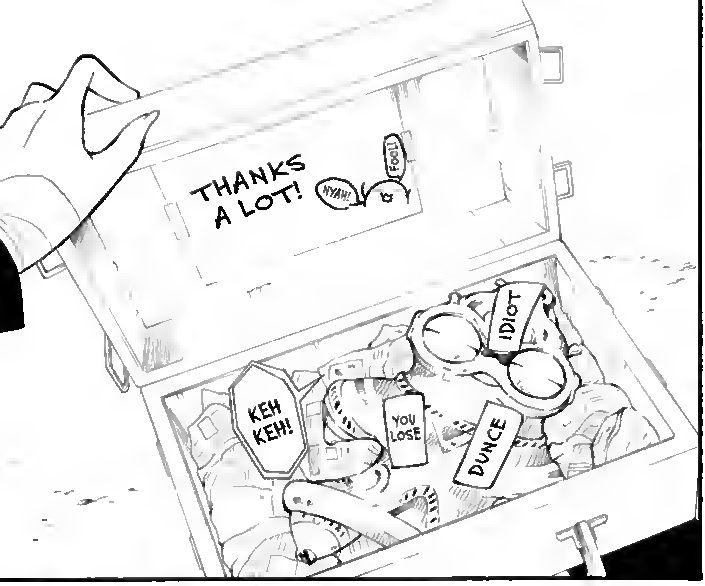
...
HUH?
WHOA.
GOOD WORK!!!
AH! HUNH!?
THAT'S OUR PIECE OF THE THIRD RELIC!!
HYA-HOOOO!
WASN'T HINATA BRINGING THE RELIC?
ARRRGH! GRAAH!
YAHOO!!
...OH...
NO.
HE WAS THE DECOY ...
...IS THE CRUX OF THE DEAL GOING DOWN RIGHT NOW.
—THE ANTI-ANGEL RELIC...
SINCE SATSUKI CAN'T GO NEAR THE MEETING SITE BECAUSE OF THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC...
...HE MIGHT COME AFTER THIS—NOT TO MENTION ARCANA.
YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT MAKES SENSE.
IT PROBABLY WON'T BE EASY TO GET IT TO TSUZUKI.

...I'LL MAKE A COPY AND PLAY THE DECOY DELIVERY BOY.
YOU DELIVER THE REAL ONE.
THAT'S WHY...
OM-
...OH...
...AND DON'T TELL TSUZUKI UNTIL YOU SEE HIM.
I THINK...
...SATSUKI'S TAPPING HIS CELL.
YOU'D BETTER MAKE IT BACK ALIVE.
...THAT FOOL. IF HE FACES THE ENEMY IN THAT STATE...
... HE'LL DIE FOR SURE.
...NOW, THEN...
...I THINK WE'RE ALL SET?
BUT ...
...YOU HAVE MET ALL OF OUR TERMS.
I'M TROUBLED THAT YOU TOOK OUR HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC TOO...
.....
HEH...
...VERY WELL.


LET'S MAKE OUR TRADE: THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC...
...FOR THE FOURTH RELIC.


AHHHH I'M SO RELIEVED! SERIOUSLY...

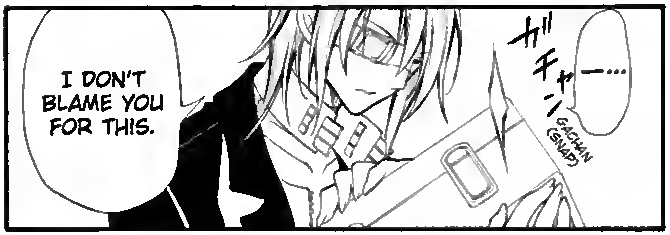

YES!

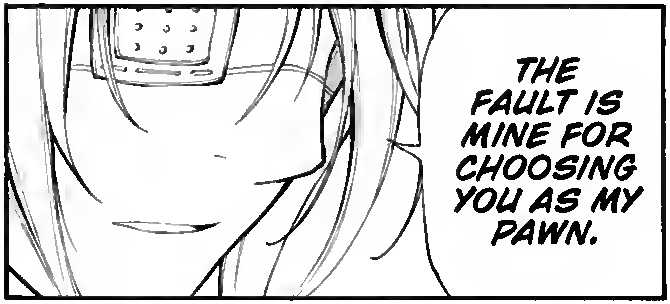

THANKS A LOT!
FOOL!
KYAH!
IDIOT
KEH KEH!
YOU LOSE
DUNCE

...WAIT!
NO WAY!
IT CAN'T BE A FAKE...!

...!

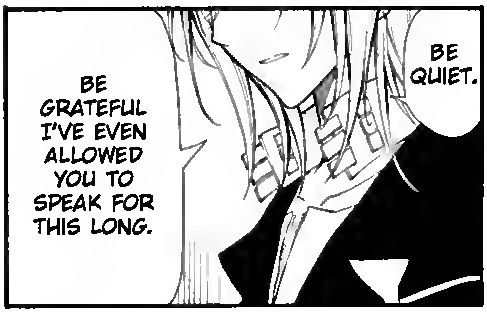
KEH KEH!
...THIS IS...


I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR THIS.
ーー...
ガチャーン
GACHAN (SNAP)

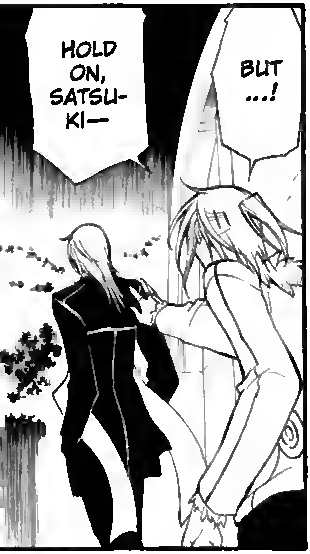

THE FAULT IS MINE FOR CHOOSING YOU AS MY PAWN.

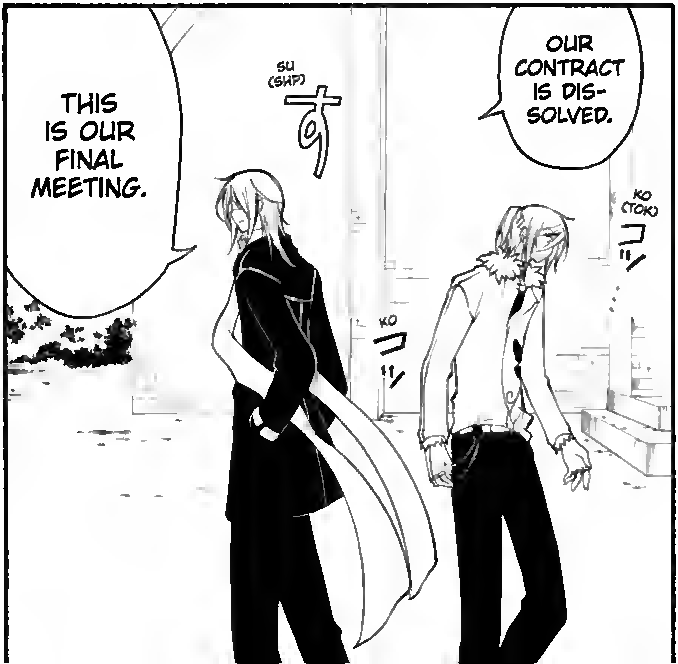
...
AHH
...
DAN
GYAAAAD
THE MOON IS WANING.

THE THIRD CRUSADE IS OVER...
TSUZUKI AND ARCANA'S DEAL IS DONE...
...AND THE FOURTH RELIC HAS GONE TO TSUZUKI.


BE QUIET.
BE GRATEFUL I'VE EVEN ALLOWED YOU TO SPEAK FOR THIS LONG.

SA-TSUKI ...!


BUT ...!
HOLD ON, SATSU-KI—


OUR CONTRACT IS DIS-SOLVED.
THIS IS OUR FINAL MEETING.
SU (SHIP)
KO (CHO)
KO

DO NOT TOUCH ME...
...FILTH.
GAH ...!

LET YOUR CURSE TAKE YOU, PITIFUL AND ALONE...
CRAWL AWAY AND DIE, HALF-BLOOD!

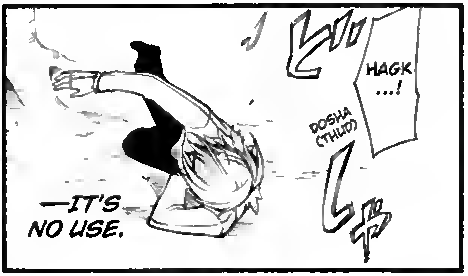
SAA (SWISH)

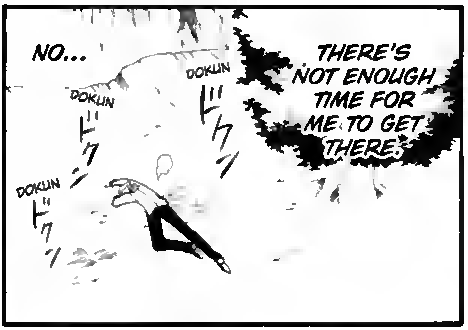
DAM-MIT...
WHAT DO I DO NOW...?
...ANH...
YORO GWOBBLE
I HAVE...
...NO WAY OUT!!
NO!
NO, NO, NO!!
I DON'T WANNA DIE!!
WHAT DO I...?
NO, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT!
I GOTTA GET A HOLD OF A DIVINE RELIC, AND...
—TSUZUKI AND ARCANA SHOULD STILL BE AT THE MEETING SITE.
OH!
AND THERE ARE LOTS OF RELICS THERE.
IF I SNAG THEM...

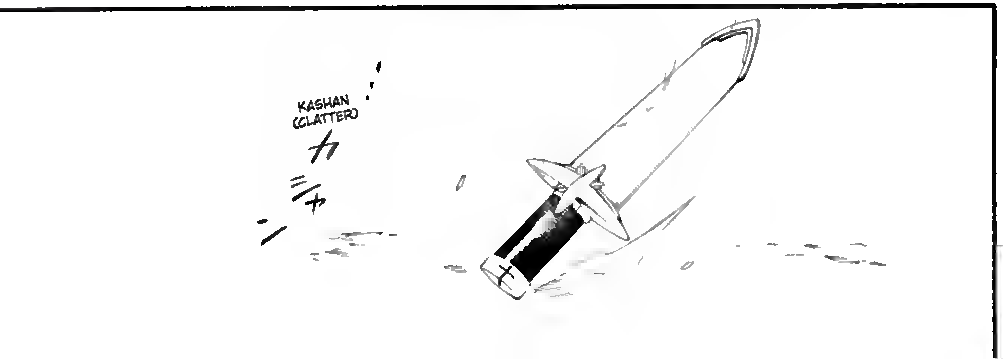
DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN
WHAT THE ...!?
THIS IS WORSE THAN USUAL...!
MY CHEST IS SEIZING UP...
DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN
GNH ...!
AHH ...
GH!
DOKUN

COULD THIS BE... THE FINAL ATTACK ...!?
DOKUN
DOKUN
HFFI
DOKUN

NO...! I DON'T...
...WANT TO DIE HERE ...!!

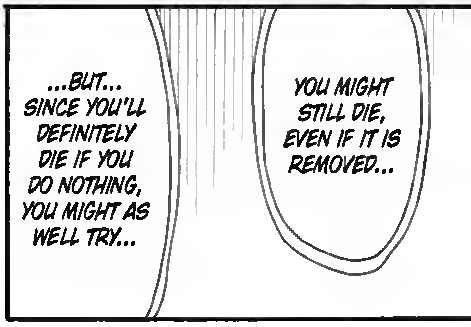

HAGK ...!
DOSHA (THUD)
—IT'S NO USE.

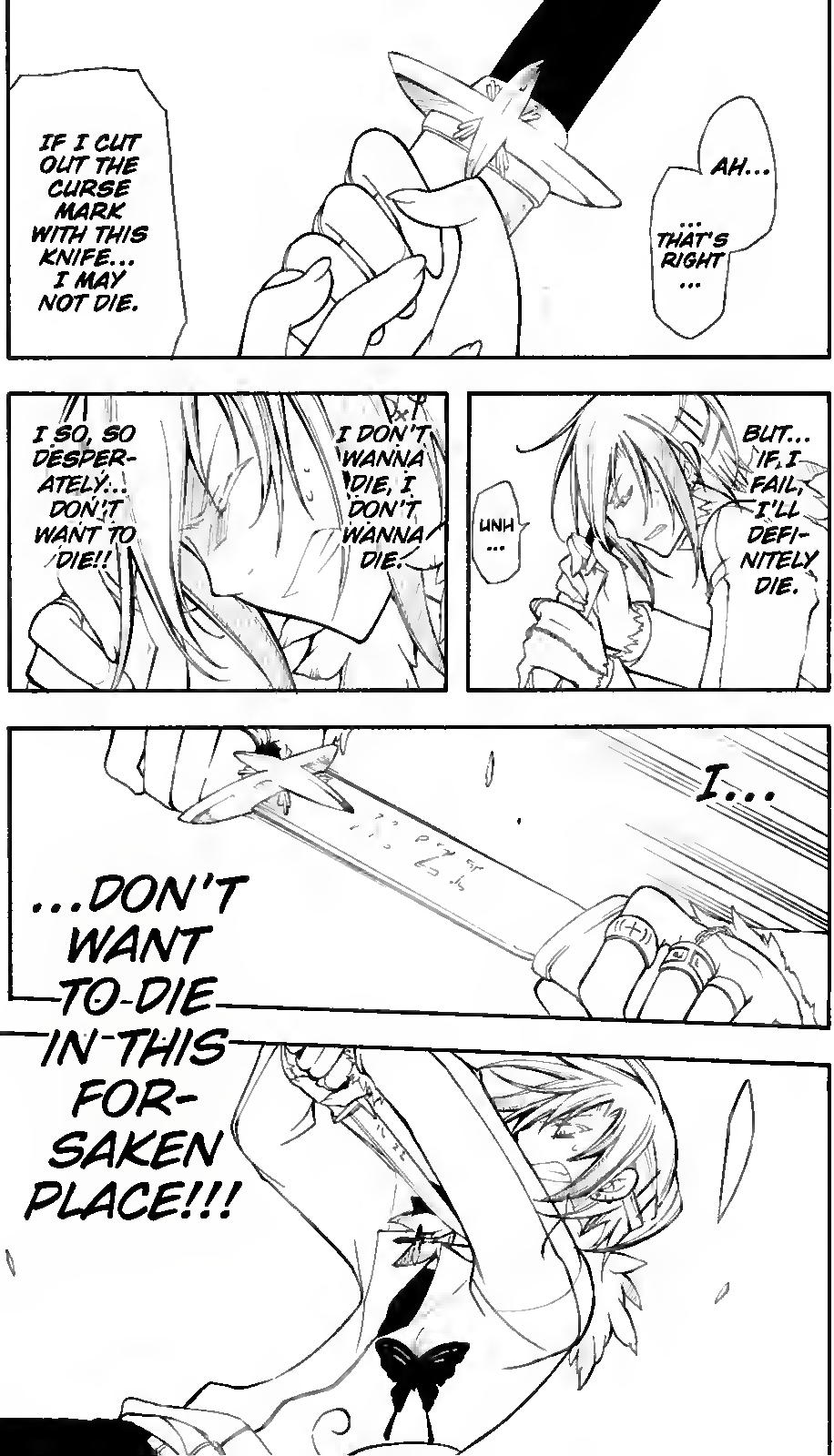

NO...
DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN
THERE'S NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR ME TO GET THERE.


KASHAN (CLATTER)

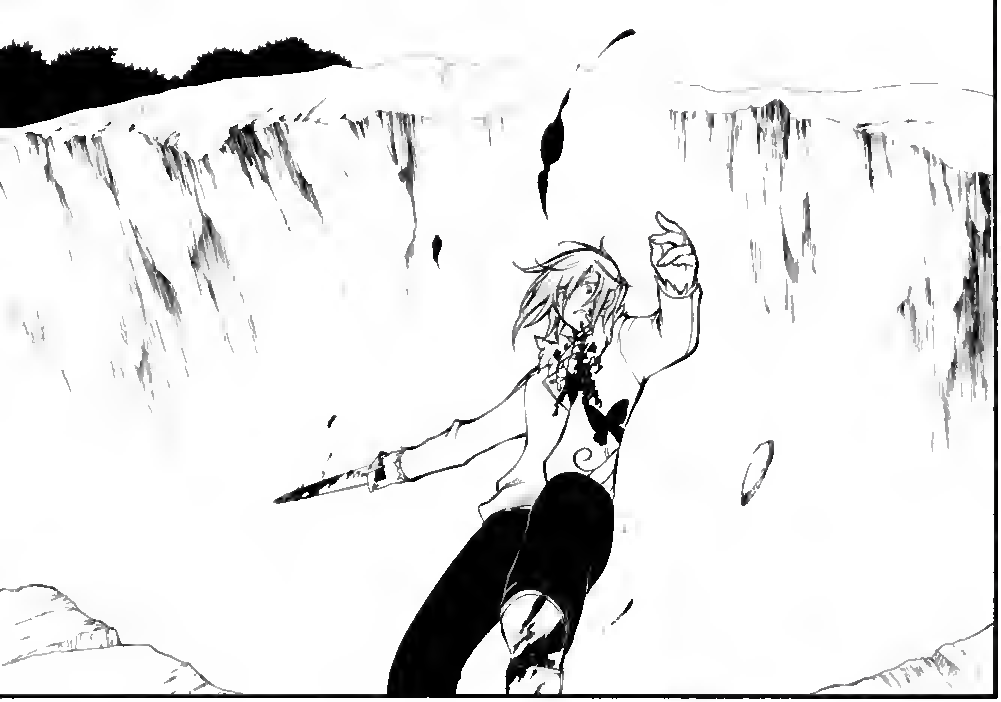
YOU...
...DON'T WANT TO DIE, DO YOU?

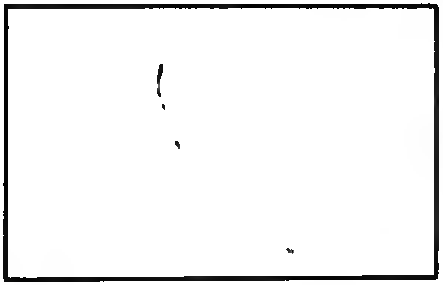
IF YOU WANT TO BE SAVED ...
...USE IT TO GOUGE OUT YOUR CURSE MARK.

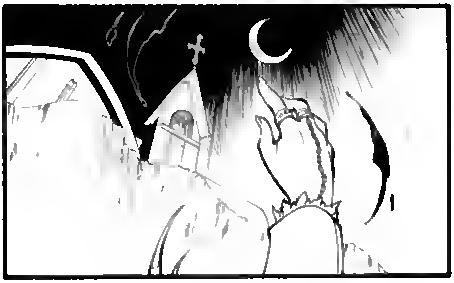

YOU MIGHT STILL DIE, EVEN IF IT IS REMOVED...
...BUT... SINCE YOU'LL DEFINITELY DIE IF YOU DO NOTHING, YOU MIGHT AS WELL TRY...

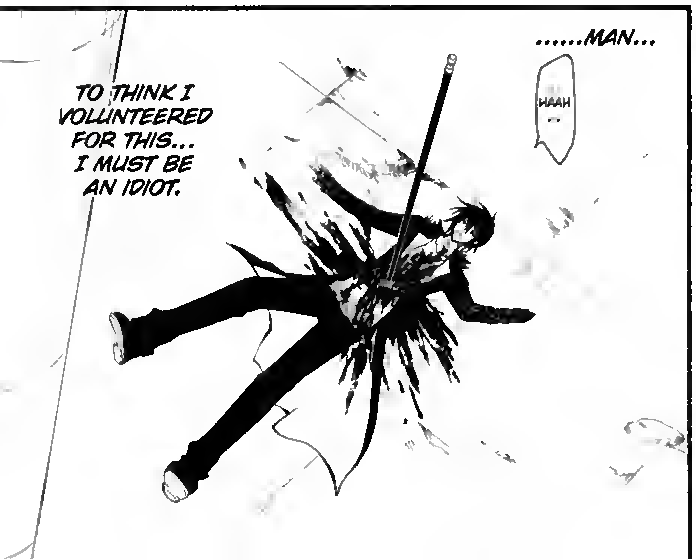

IF I CUT OUT THE CURSE MARK WITH THIS KNIFE... I MAY NOT DIE.
AH...
...THAT'S RIGHT...
I SO, SO DESPERATELY... DON'T WANT TO DIE!!
I DON'T WANNA DIE, I DON'T WANNA DIE.
UNH...
BUT... IF I FAIL, I'LL DEFINITELY DIE.
I...
...DON'T WANT TO DIE IN THIS FORSAKEN PLACE!!!

GU (PRESS)
GU
AH... AHH!
BOTA (SPLAT)
AH... RGH!
GU
ZAWA (RUSTLE)
NOT... DYING!
I'M...
AH ...!
...UNH!
HFF!
GURI
HFF!
GURI (GRIND)
...NOT ...
...DY—
!
ZU (SKID)

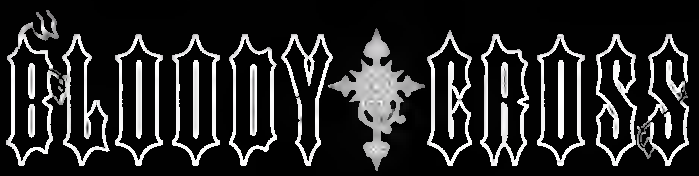




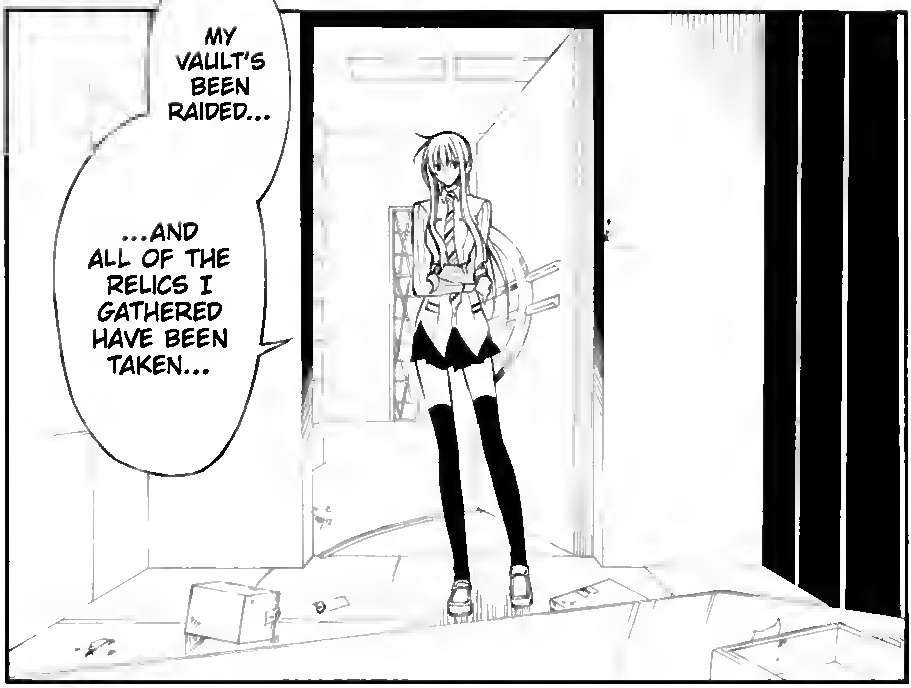


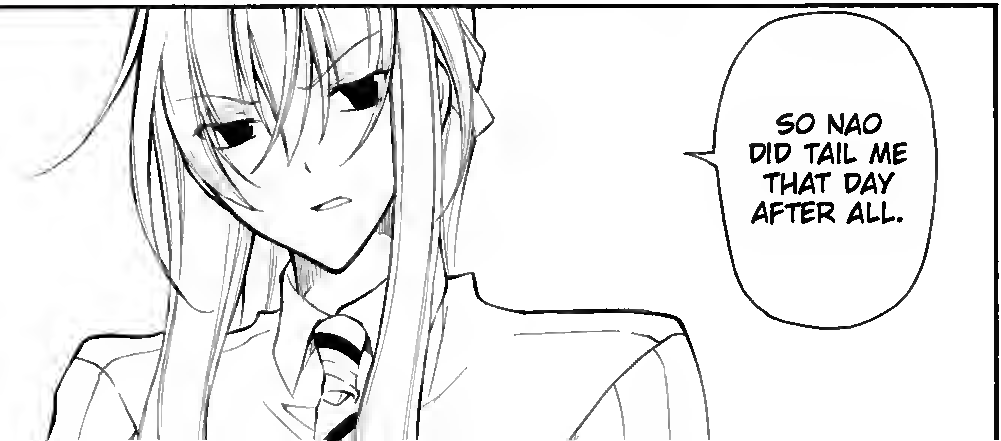

TO THINK I VOLUNTEERED FOR THIS... I MUST BE AN IDIOT.
.....MAN...
HAAH

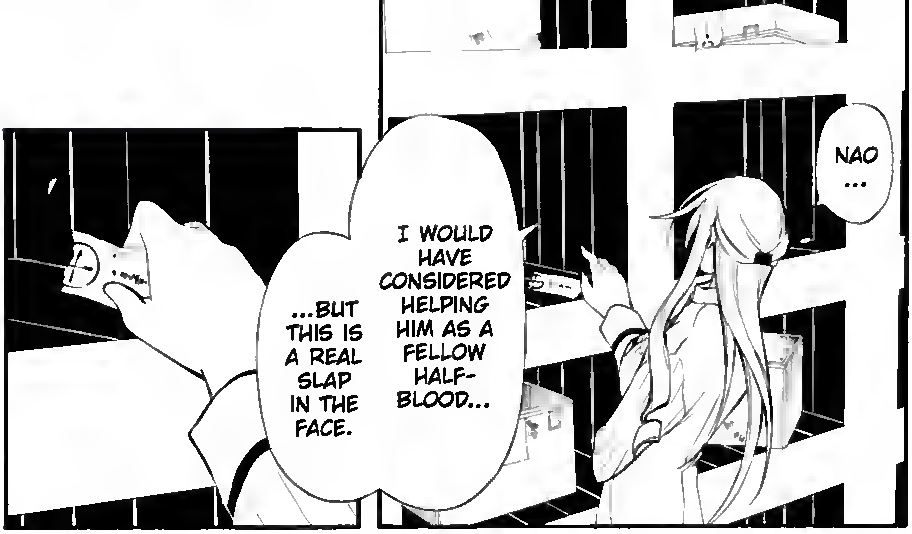
...AHH, MY BODY...
HAAH
THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR ACTING SO OUT OF CHARACTER.
GOFU (KOFF)
...MY BODY... FEELS SO... HEAVY...


BLOODY CROSS

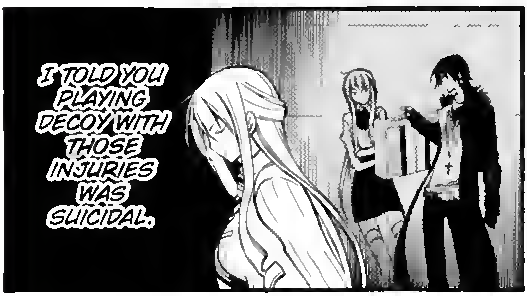
BLOODY CROSS


MY VAULT'S BEEN RAIDED...
...AND ALL OF THE RELICS I GATHERED HAVE BEEN TAKEN...

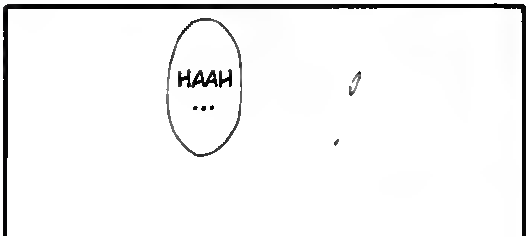

SO NAO DID TAIL ME THAT DAY AFTER ALL.


NAO
...
I WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED HELPING HIM AS A FELLOW HALF-BLOOD...
...BUT THIS IS A REAL SLAP IN THE FACE.

...HAVE BOTH BEEN MISSING SINCE THE CRUSADE.
NAO...AND HINATA...


I TOLD YOU PLAYING DECOY WITH THOSE INJURIES WAS SUICIDAL.

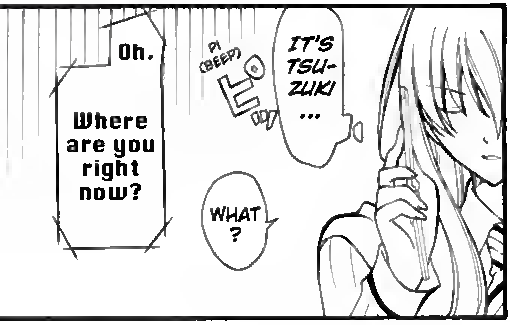
THAT FOOL...


HAAH
...

THE BODIES HAVEN'T TURNED UP, BUT...
...TSUZUKI SAYS IT'S LIKELY THEY'RE BOTH DEAD, GIVEN THE CIRCUM-STANCES.

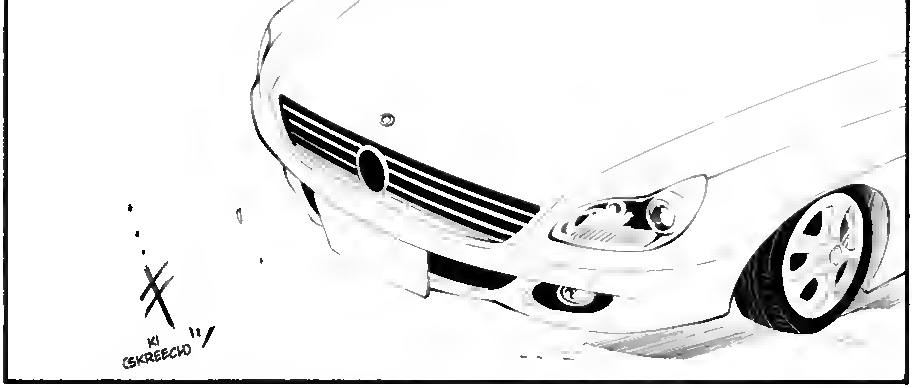
PLLL

...LEAVES A BAD TASTE IN MY MOUTH.

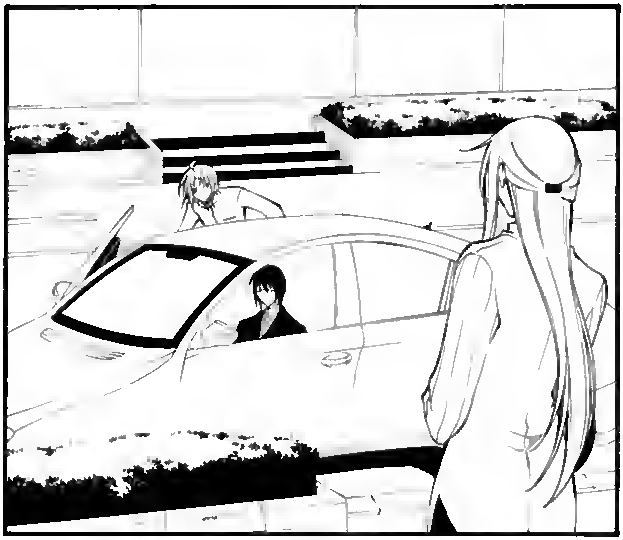

Oh.
Where are you right now?
PI (BEEP)
IT'S TSU-ZUKI ...
WHAT ?

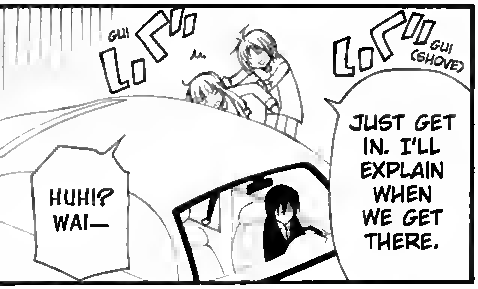
Can we meet up some-where?
I've got some-thing impor-tant to discuss.

Chapter 23
Words of an Angel

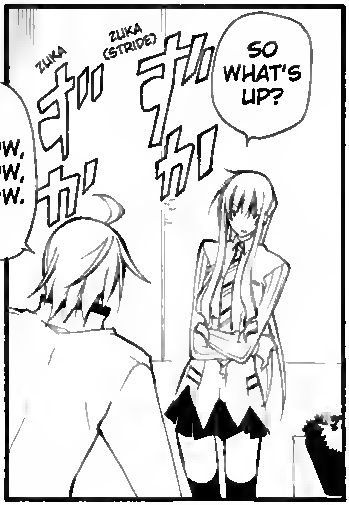

KI
(SKREECH)

YO!

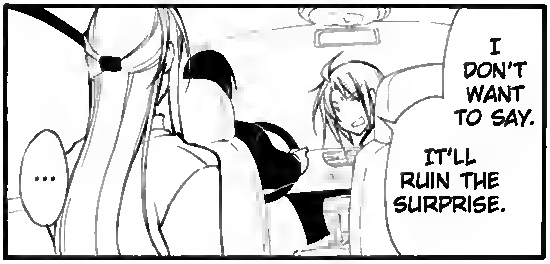


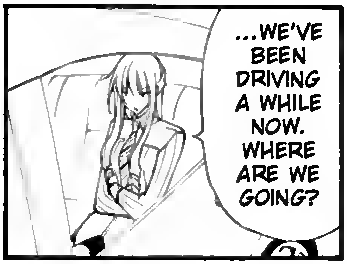

GUI
GUI
(GHOVE)
HUH!? WAI—
JUST GET IN. I'LL EXPLAIN WHEN WE GET THERE.

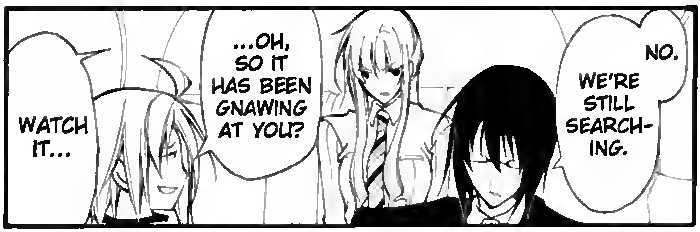
GA
(GRAB)
NOW, NOW, NOW.

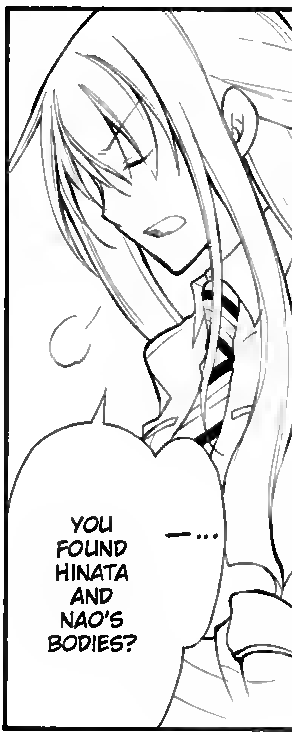

ZUKA
ZUKA
(STRIDE)
SO WHAT'S UP?

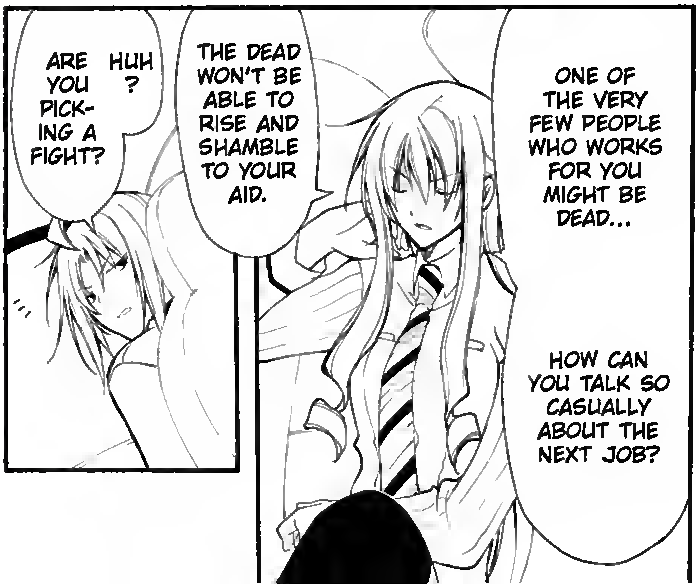
HEY ...!!
BAN
(SLAM)


...
I DON'T WANT TO SAY.
IT'LL RUIN THE SURPRISE.


...WE'VE BEEN DRIVING A WHILE NOW. WHERE ARE WE GOING?

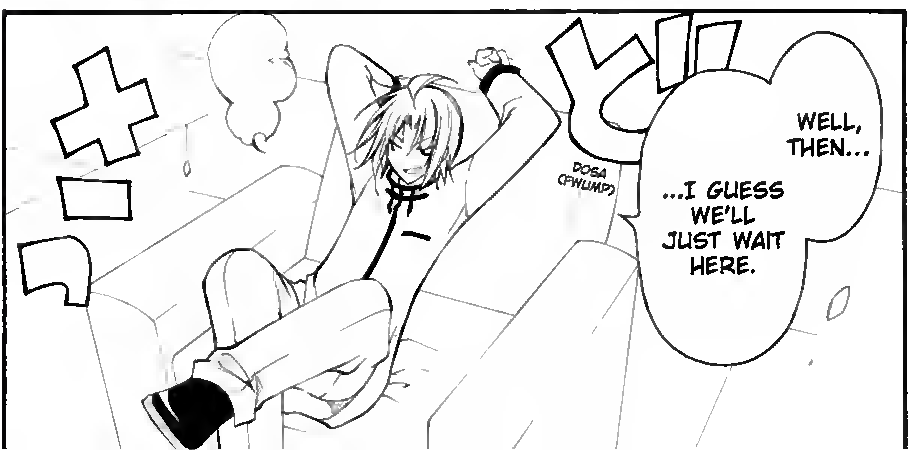

WATCH IT...
...OH, SO IT HAS BEEN GNAWING AT YOU?
NO. WE'RE STILL SEARCH-ING.

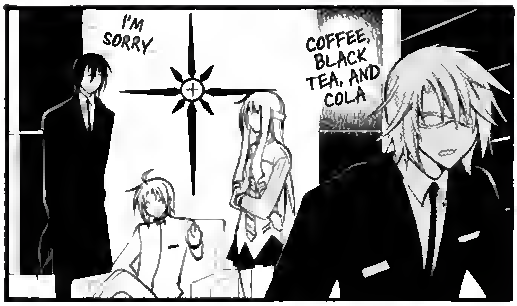

YOU FOUND HINATA AND NAO'S BODIES?
—...


ARE YOU PICK-ING A FIGHT?
HUH ?
THE DEAD WON'T BE ABLE TO RISE AND SHAMBLE TO YOUR AID.
ONE OF THE VERY FEW PEOPLE WHO WORKS FOR YOU MIGHT BE DEAD...
HOW CAN YOU TALK SO CASUALLY ABOUT THE NEXT JOB?

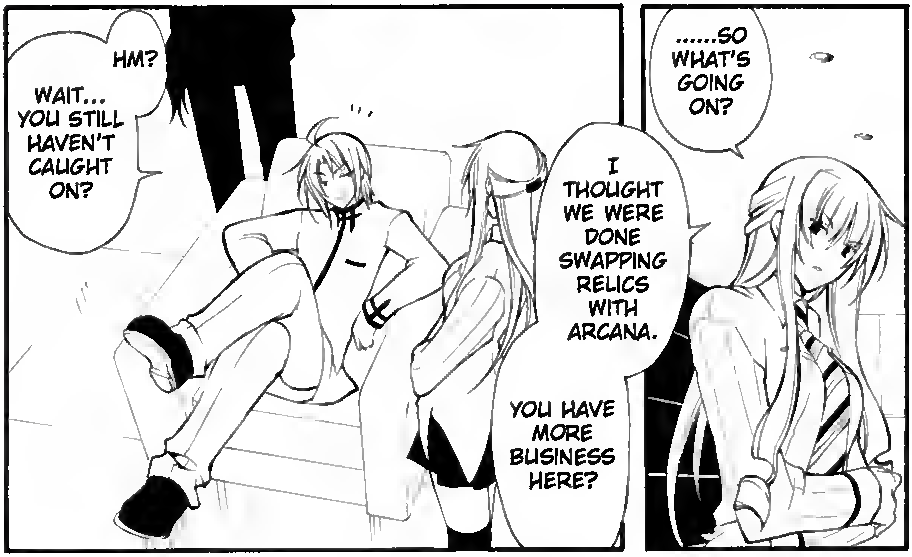
YEAH.
MAYBE I AM.
PAN (CLAP)
PAN
OKAY, OKAY.
WE'RE HERE, DEAR CHIL-DREN.
OUT, OUT.
KIKII (SKREEE)
AH!
GAKLIN (LURCH)
HUH ...?
THIS IS...!

WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
WHERE IS THE BOSS?
HE MAY BE A FEW MINUTES LATE.
OUR SINCEREST APOLOGIES.
OH. THAT'S ALL RIGHT. WE'RE THE ONES WHO TURNED UP EARLY, AFTER ALL.

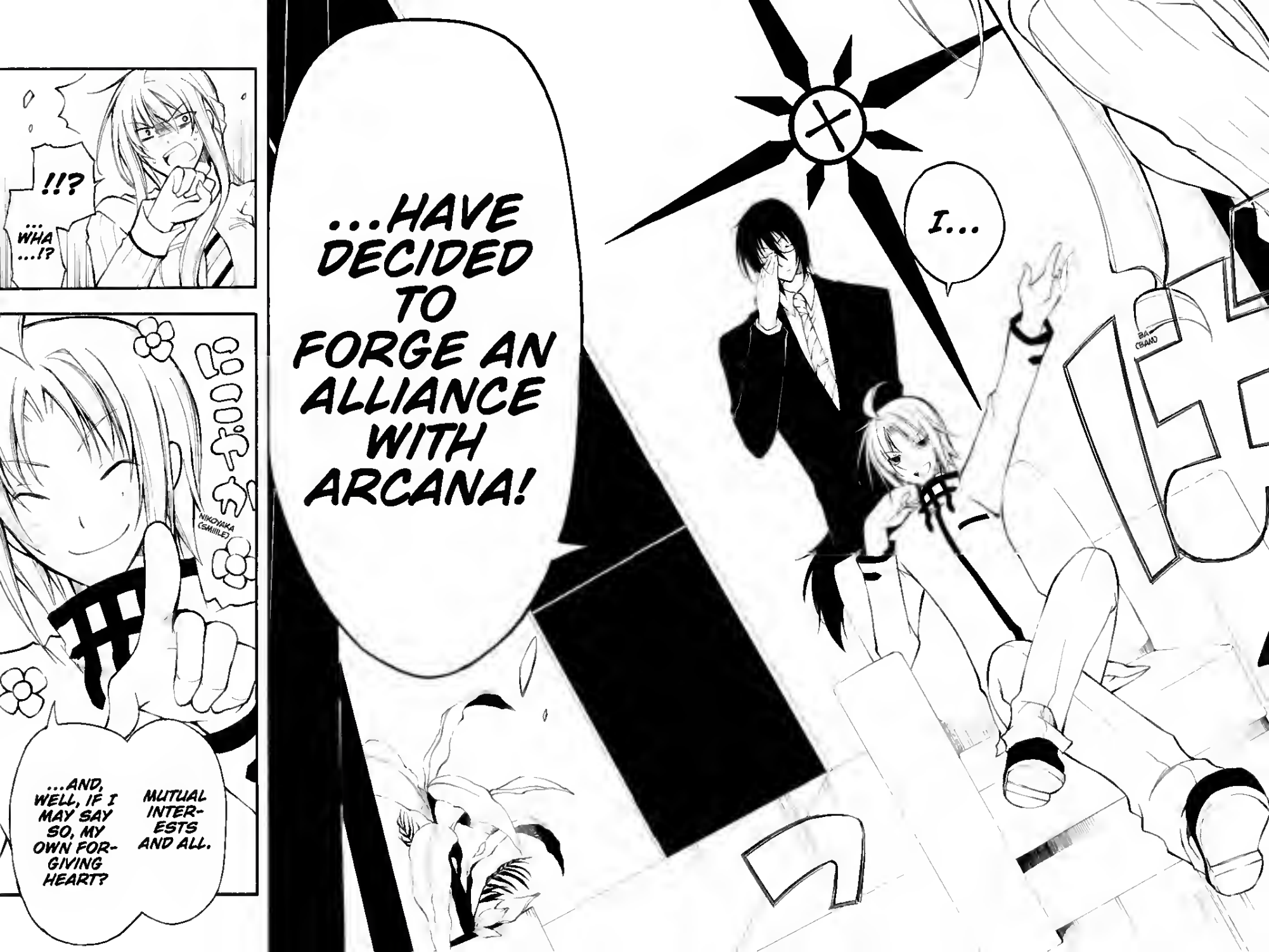

WELL, THEN...
...I GUESS WE'LL JUST WAIT HERE.
DOSA (PWUMP)


I'M SORRY
COFFEE, BLACK TEA, AND COLA

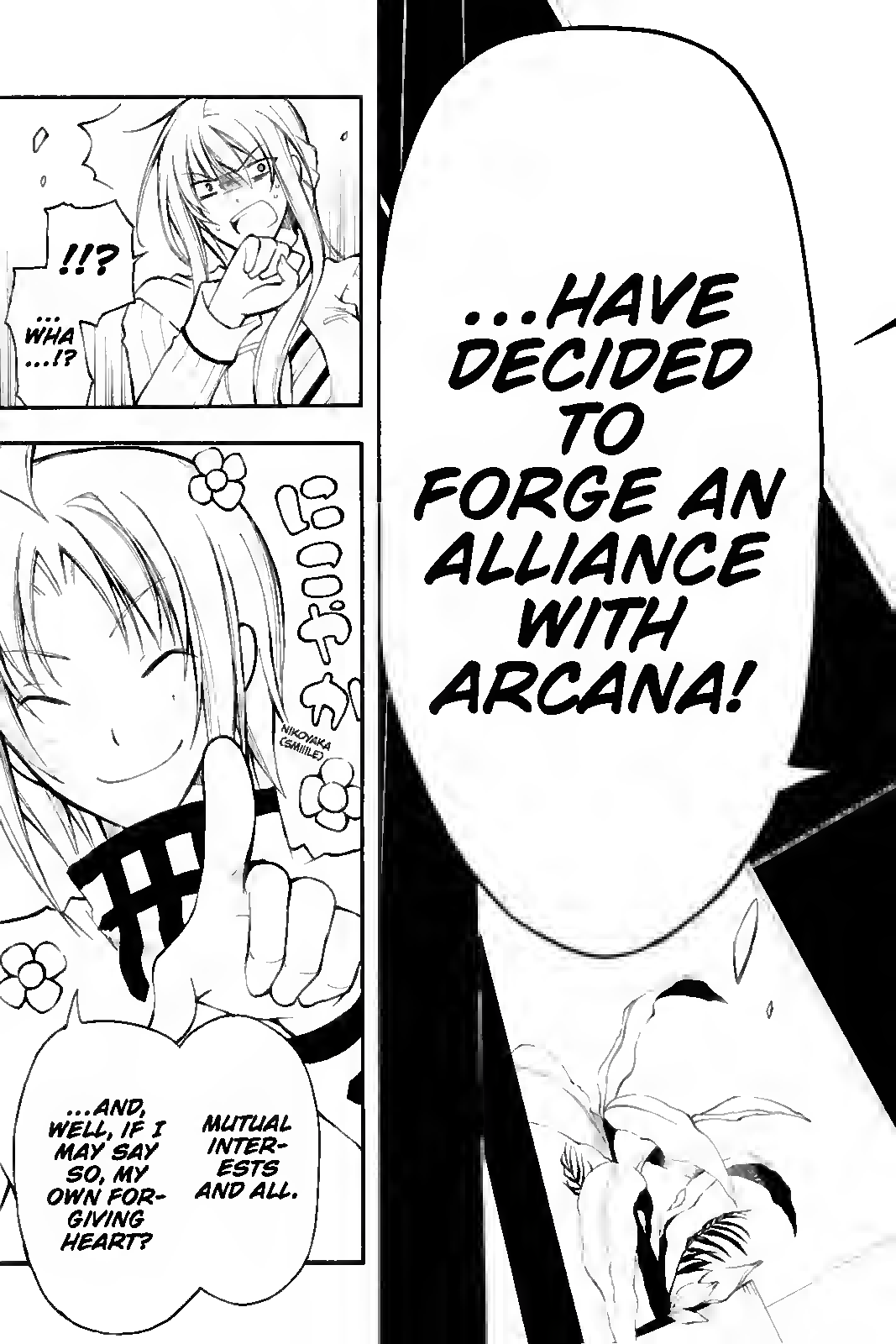
OH!
YOU DON'T SERVE TEA?

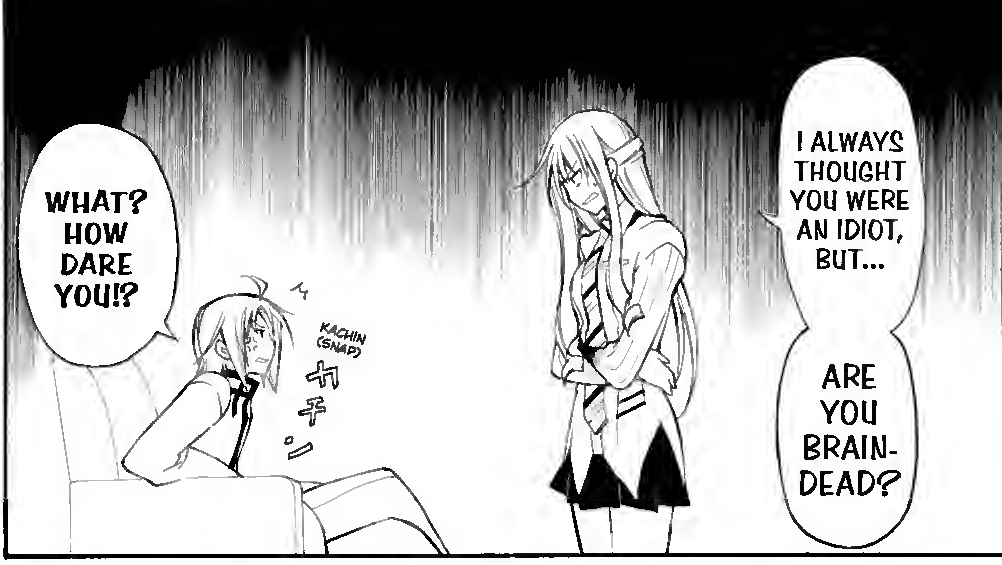

HM?
WAIT... YOU STILL HAVEN'T CAUGHT ON?
I THOUGHT WE WERE DONE SWAPPING RELICS WITH ARCANA.
YOU HAVE MORE BUSINESS HERE?
.....SO WHAT'S GOING ON?

YOU'RE BEING DENSER THAN USUAL.


!!?
...WHA...!?
...AND, WELL, IF I MAY SAY SO, MY OWN FORGIVING HEART?
MUTUAL INTERESTS AND ALL.
NIKOYAKA (SMIIIILE)
...HAVE DECIDED TO FORGE AN ALLIANCE WITH ARCANA!
I...
BA-CRAAD

I...

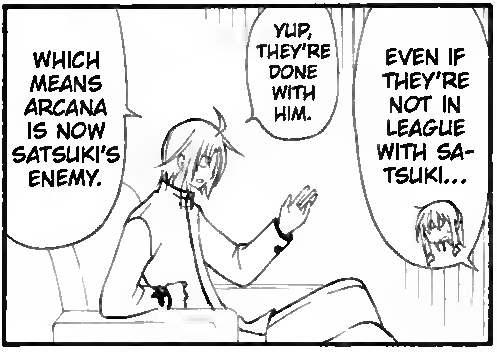

...HAVE DECIDED TO FORGE AN ALLIANCE WITH ARCANA!
!!?
... WHA ...!?
NIKO NIKO (SMILE)
MUTUAL INTER-ESTS AND ALL.
...AND, WELL, IF I MAY SAY SO, MY OWN FOR-GIVING HEART?


I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE AN IDIOT, BUT...
ARE YOU BRAIN-DEAD?
KACHIN (SNAP)
WHAT? HOW DARE YOU!?

YOU'RE THE IDIOT.
MY ENEMY IS SA-TSUKI!
KI (CREAK)
HE'S BEYOND HELP.
THEY'RE A THIRD PARTY THAT'S BEEN MEDDLING BETWEEN YOU TWO IN THE CRUSADES.

WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO SAY?
ARCANA'S YOUR ENEMY, REMEM-BER!?

...SO WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
THUS ...
..."THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND"...
...

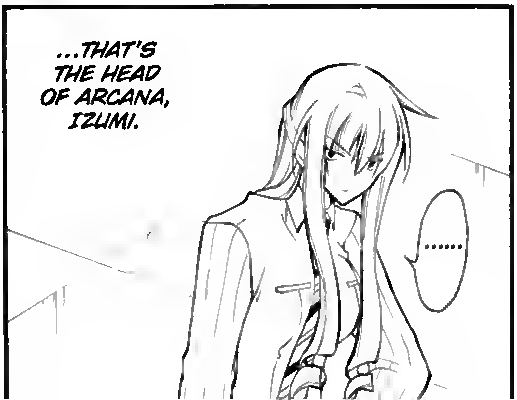

WHICH MEANS ARCANA IS NOW SATSUKI'S ENEMY.
YUP, THEY'RE DONE WITH HIM.
EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT IN LEAGUE WITH SA-TSUKI...

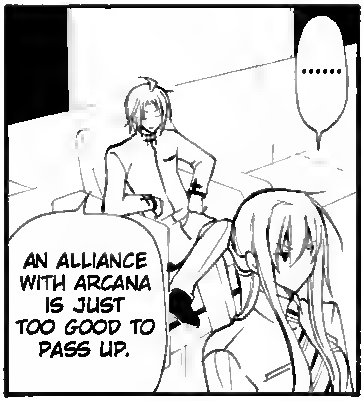
YOU DO UNDERSTAND WHAT ARCANA'S BEEN DOING UP TILL NOW, RIGHT?
YEAH.
TO AN EXTENT.
WELL... PUTTING ASIDE THEIR BEHIND-THE-SCENES ACTIVITIES...
...PUBLICLY, ARCANA IS A RESPECTABLE WEAPONS DEVELOPER AND DISTRIBUTOR...
THEY DON'T ENGAGE SOLELY IN UNDERHANDED DEALINGS OR OPERATIONS.
.....
SO YOU'VE BEEN THOROUGHLY BRAINWASHED TOO.
AS FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO HINATA...
...WE SENT HIM IN AS OUR SPY, SO WE CAN'T ACT SURPRISED...
...THAT THEY BEAT HIM UP WHEN THEY CAUGHT HIM.
ACTUALLY, I'M STILL HUNG UP ON THEM TRYING TO KILL ME.
—THOSE WHO WOULD BE LEADERS...
KO CTOKO

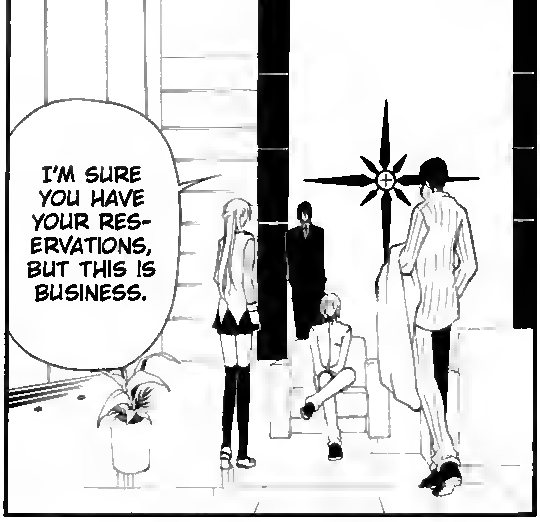
...MUST CONSIDER A WIDE ARRAY OF SENTIMENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES ...
...AND THEN ARRIVE AT THE BEST COURSE.

HE IS A GOOD, RATIONAL, AND REASONABLE LEADER.

...DON'T GLARE AT ME LIKE THAT.

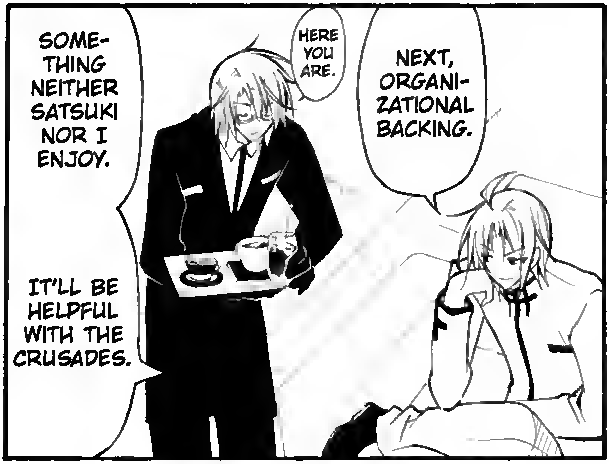

...THAT'S THE HEAD OF ARCANA, IZUMI.
.....

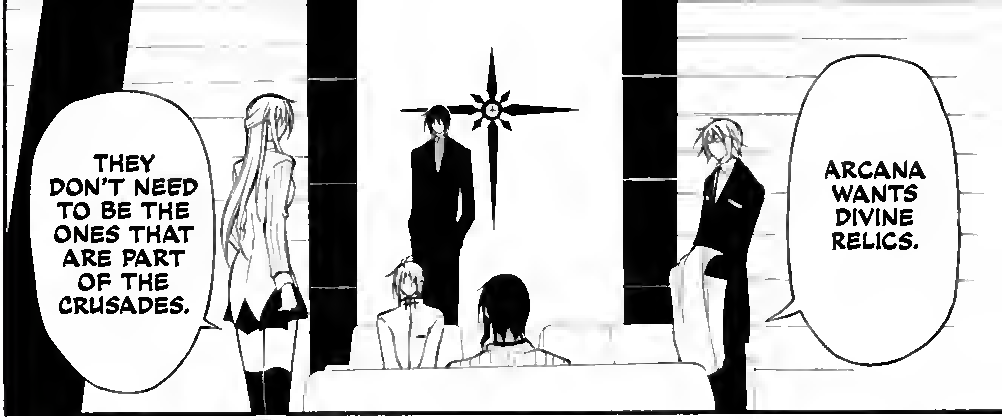

.....
AN ALLIANCE WITH ARCANA IS JUST TOO GOOD TO PASS UP.


I'M SURE YOU HAVE YOUR RESERVATIONS, BUT THIS IS BUSINESS.

IT SEEMS EVEN HINATA WAS BUYING INTEL FROM THEM.
FIRST, INFORMATION.
THEY HAVE AN IMPRESSIVE INTELLIGENCE NETWORK THAT IS SECOND TO NONE.

...TO US WORKING WITH TSUZUKI TOO.
OF COURSE, THERE ARE MERITS ...


SOMETHING NEITHER SATSUKI NOR I ENJOY.
IT'LL BE HELPFUL WITH THE CRUSADES.
HERE YOU ARE.
NEXT, ORGANIZATIONAL BACKING.


THEY DON'T NEED TO BE THE ONES THAT ARE PART OF THE CRUSADES.
ARCANA WANTS DIVINE RELICS.

(TO KNEEL)
AR-CANA ...
...TRIED TO KILL ME BECAUSE OF THIS MARK.

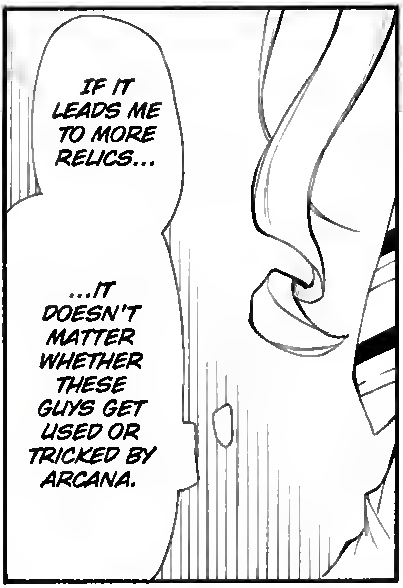
WE WANT TO WORK WITH A GOD CANDIDATE WHO HAS THE ABILITY TO SENSE THEM...
...AND THE LUCK TO FIND THEM.

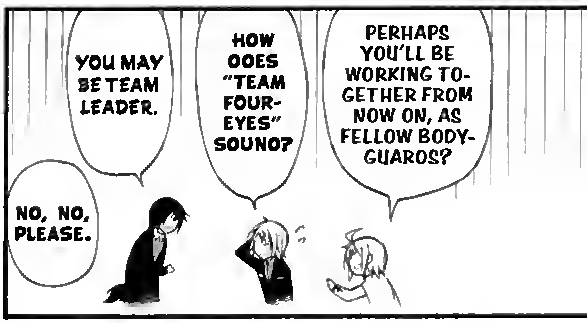
DO AS YOU PLEASE.
IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO BUTT IN.
...FINE, FINE. IT'S UP TO YOU WHO YOU SHAKE HANDS WITH.

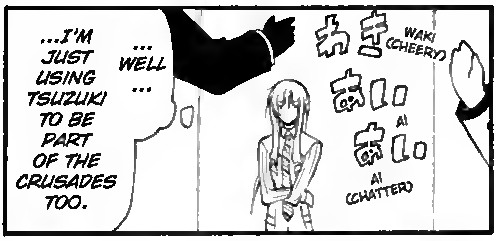
BUT...
...THERE'S ONE THING I CAN'T LET GO.

WE'VE ALREADY BURNED OUR BRIDGES WITH SATSUKI.
WHY DELIBERATELY DESTROY OUR ALLIANCE?
WE WON'T MAKE AN ATTEMPT ON YOUR LIFE AGAIN.
HEH HEH...
THUS, IN THE SPIRIT OF PEACE AND GENEROSITY ...
...I WILL ALLOW YOU TO KEEP THE HALF OF THE THIRD RELIC...
...THAT YOU STOLE FROM US DURING THE OTHER DAY'S CRUSADE.
KYU (TWO)
キュ
SO GOOD IT MAKES ME NAUSEOUS.
KYU (TWEE)
キュ
SEE?
IT'S A GOOD DEAL.
I DON'T... GET THE SENSE HE'S LYING...

CAN'T HE SEE...THAT THEY COULD JUST AS EASILY BETRAY US TOO?
—I MEAN, THESE GUYS ALREADY BETRAYED SATSUKI.

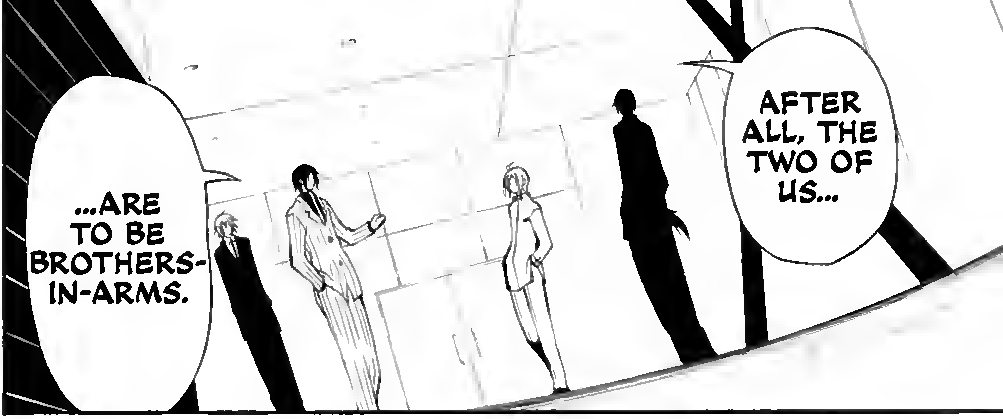

IF IT LEADS ME TO MORE RELICS...
...IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER THESE GUYS GET USED OR TRICKED BY ARCANA.

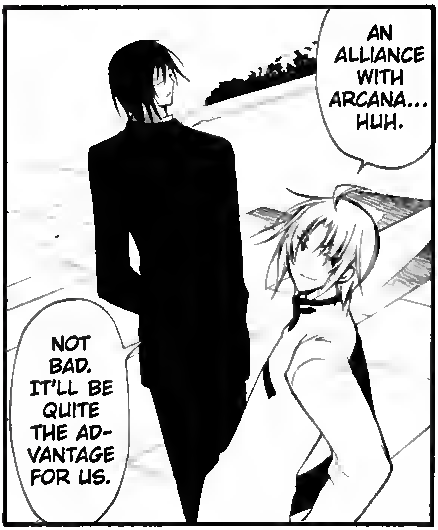

YOU MAY BE TEAM LEADER.
HOW DOES "TEAM FOUR-EYES" SOUND?
PERHAPS YOU'LL BE WORKING TOGETHER FROM NOW ON, AS FELLOW BODYGUARDS?
NO, NO, PLEASE.

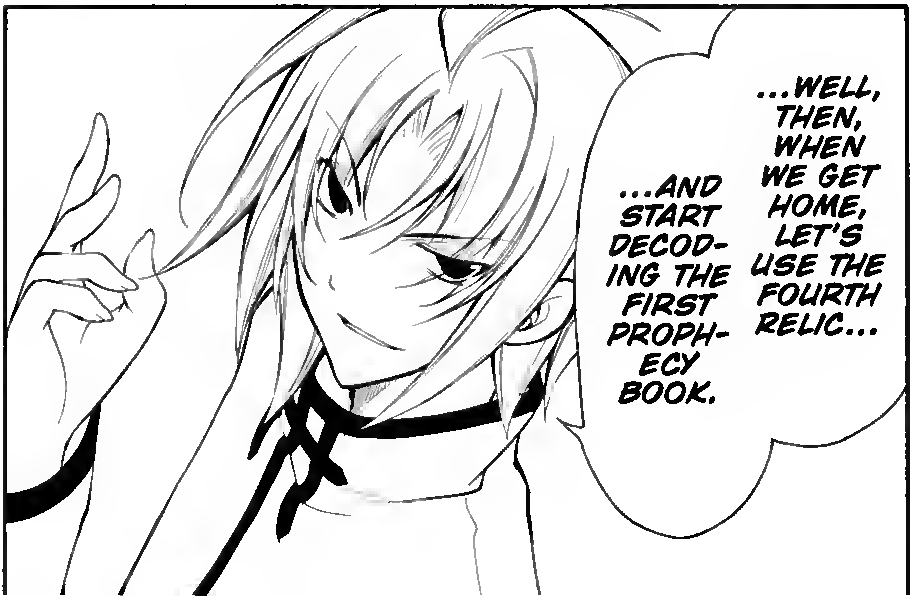

...I'M JUST USING TSUZUKI TO BE PART OF THE CRUSADES TOO.
...WELL...
わき WAKI (CHEER)
あい AI
あい AI (CHATTER)

...SO THEY DON'T KILL ME IN MY SLEEP.
I JUST NEED TO KEEP UP MY GUARD...

I'LL...
...BE GOING, THEN.
WE'RE DONE HERE NOW, AREN'T WE?
HUNH?
.....
SHE HAS NO TEAM SPIRIT.
パターン
PATAN (SHUT)
WE'LL BE BY AGAIN.
WE OUGHT TO BE ON OUR WAY TOO.
...WELL, NEVER MIND.
WE'VE FINISHED THE PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS.
CERTAINLY.
YOU'RE WELCOME ANY TIME.

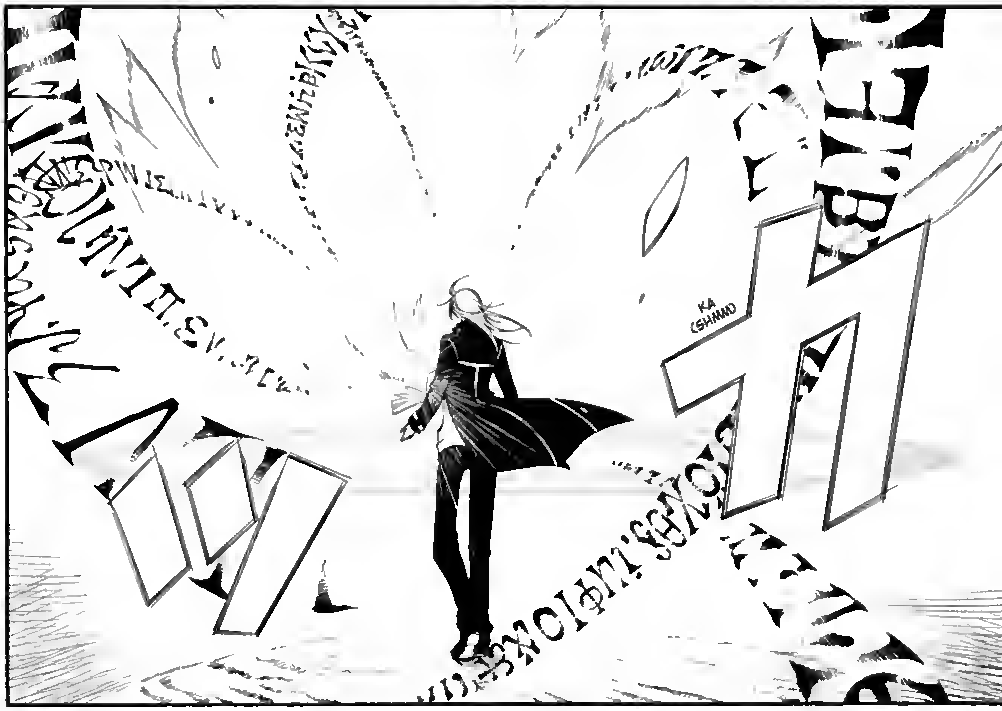

AFTER ALL, THE TWO OF US...
...ARE TO BE BROTHERS-IN-ARMS.


AN ALLIANCE WITH ARCANA... HUH.
NOT BAD. IT'LL BE QUITE THE ADVANTAGE FOR US.


...WELL, THEN, WHEN WE GET HOME, LET'S USE THE FOURTH RELIC...
...AND START DECODING THE FIRST PROPHECY BOOK.

...THE THIRD AND FOURTH RELICS...
...MAY HAVE BEEN LOST TO US IN THE LAST CRUSADE...
...BUT I OBTAINED THE REAL PRIZE— THE FIFTH RELIC.
HEE HEE!
THAT DUMMY TSUZUKI CAN'T DECODE A PROPHECY BOOK WITHOUT THE FOURTH RELIC...
...BUT SAT-SUKI'S DIFFER-ENT.
ZAA (FSHH)
LET'S BEGIN DECOD-ING...
...

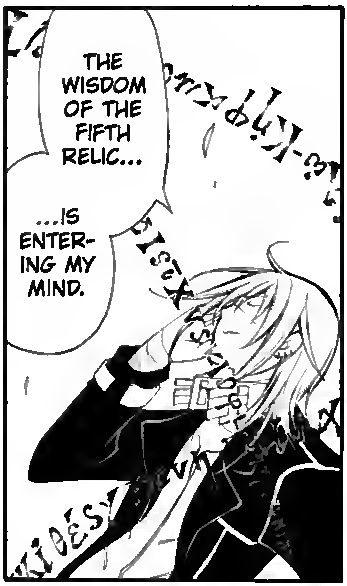
BE COR-RUPTED BY MY POWER ...
PARI (CRACKLE)
...AND REVEAL YOUR ALL TO ME...
...O PROPHECY BOOK CHOKH-MAH.


KA (SHWAD)

KOOOO (WHOOSH)

OOH!
YOU ROCK, SATSU-KI!♡

...A DESCRIPTION OF THE NEXT CRUSADE.


THE WISDOM OF THE FIFTH RELIC...
...IS ENTERING MY MIND.

...
...IT'S ...
PIKU (TWITCH)

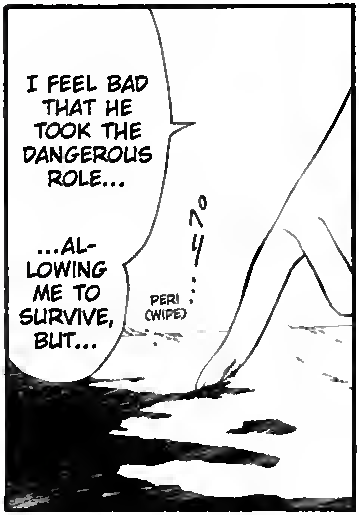
...I CAN USE THIS.

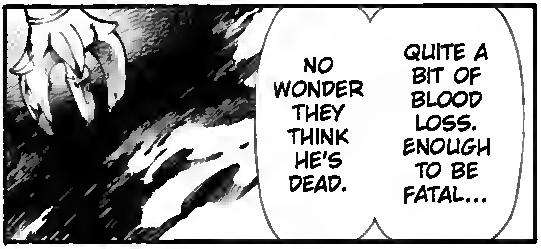
カ
ツカツ

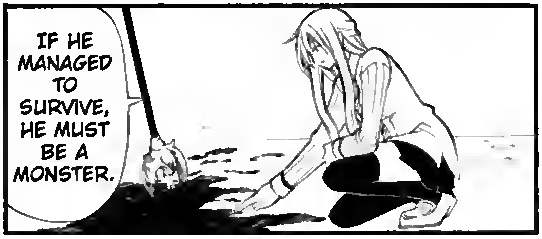
カ

ガチャ
GACHA

...I SEE.


I FEEL BAD THAT HE TOOK THE DANGEROUS ROLE...
...AL-LOWING ME TO SURVIVE, BUT...
PERI (WIPE)


NO WONDER THEY THINK HE'S DEAD.
QUITE A BIT OF BLOOD LOSS. ENOUGH TO BE FATAL...


IF HE MANAGED TO SURVIVE, HE MUST BE A MONSTER.

I'M GOING TO...
PERO CLICK
...READ YOUR BLOOD'S INFOR-MATION.

ARCANA'S STILL IN LEAGUE WITH SATSUKI!
DID YOU KILL THEM, NYA?
THERE'S A TRAITOR AMONG US...?
THESE NEGOTIATIONS ARE A TRAP.
IS IT YOU?
YOUR REPORT ON THE FRICTION BETWEEN SATSUKI AND ARCANA...
...WAS PUT TO GOOD USE.
NICE WORK!
...ARCANA HAS AN ANTI-ANGEL BELIC...!!
SHUT! I HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHO THE TRAITOR IS!
YOU'VE BEEN THE BAIT THIS TALE ABOUT OUR CRUMBLING ALLIANCE...
AND ARE NOTHING A ANTI-ANGEL BELIC...

FU (FLICKER)

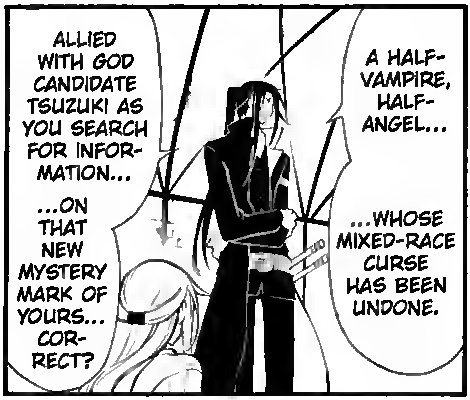
TSU (PRESS)
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TOLD HIM THE RELIC WAS A DECOY...
...YOU BIG DUMMY.
KA
KATSUN (TAK)
KA (TAK)
KA

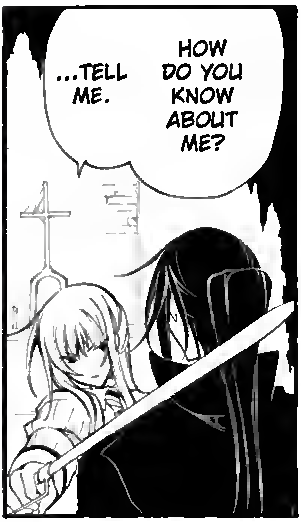
—WERE YOU EXPECTING?
KA
KA CHAK
...WHAT?
KA
KA
...IS THAT HINATA? OR MAYBE NAO?"
I WONDERED IF YOU THOUGHT ...

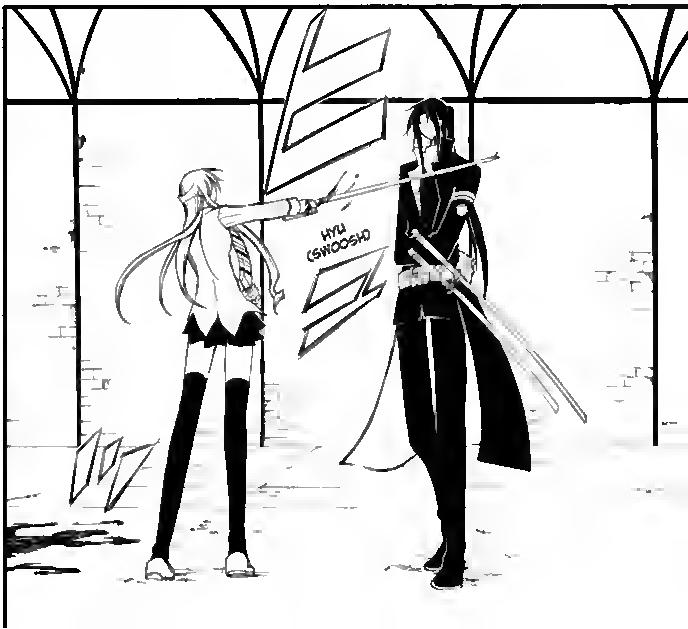
ZAWA (SHUDDER)
!
TSUKI-MIYA.

POOR GIRL.

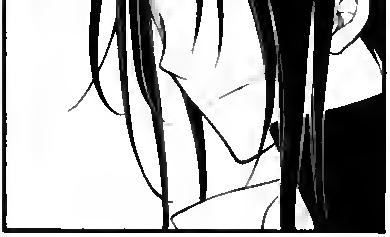
...WHO THE...?

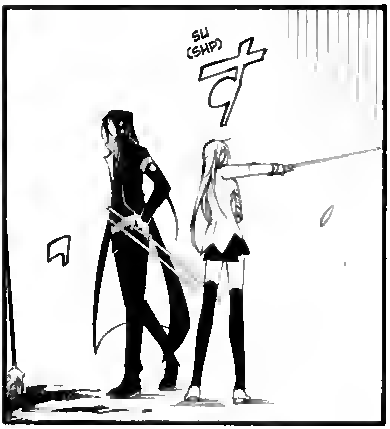

ALLIED WITH GOD CANDIDATE TSUZUKI AS YOU SEARCH FOR INFORMATION...
...ON THAT NEW MYSTERY MARK OF YOURS... CORRECT?
A HALF-VAMPIRE, HALF-ANGEL...
...WHOSE MIXED-RACE CURSE HAS BEEN UNDONE.

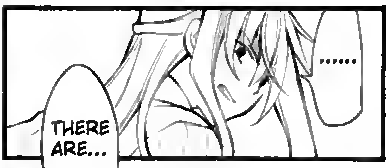

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?
...TELL ME.


HYU (SWOOSH)

BEST TO ERADICATE THEM. I FEEL.




SU (SHIP)


.....
THERE ARE...

...TOO MANY TRACES OF THE CRUSADE HERE.
TON (TAP)

THIS CHURCH'S EXISTENCE MAY VIOLATE ARTICLE 12 OF THE CRUSADE CONCEALMENT CODE.
GUWA (BWOOSH)
THEREFORE, UPON MY JUDGMENT...
...I EXPUNGE IT.
GOO (WHOOM)

THIS DARK POWER...
...IS JUST LIKE HIS...
ZAZA (SKID)
... DAM-MIT...
THAT POWER... ARE YOU KIDDING ME!?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK ABOUT THE MARK?
WELL?
TSUKI-MIYA?

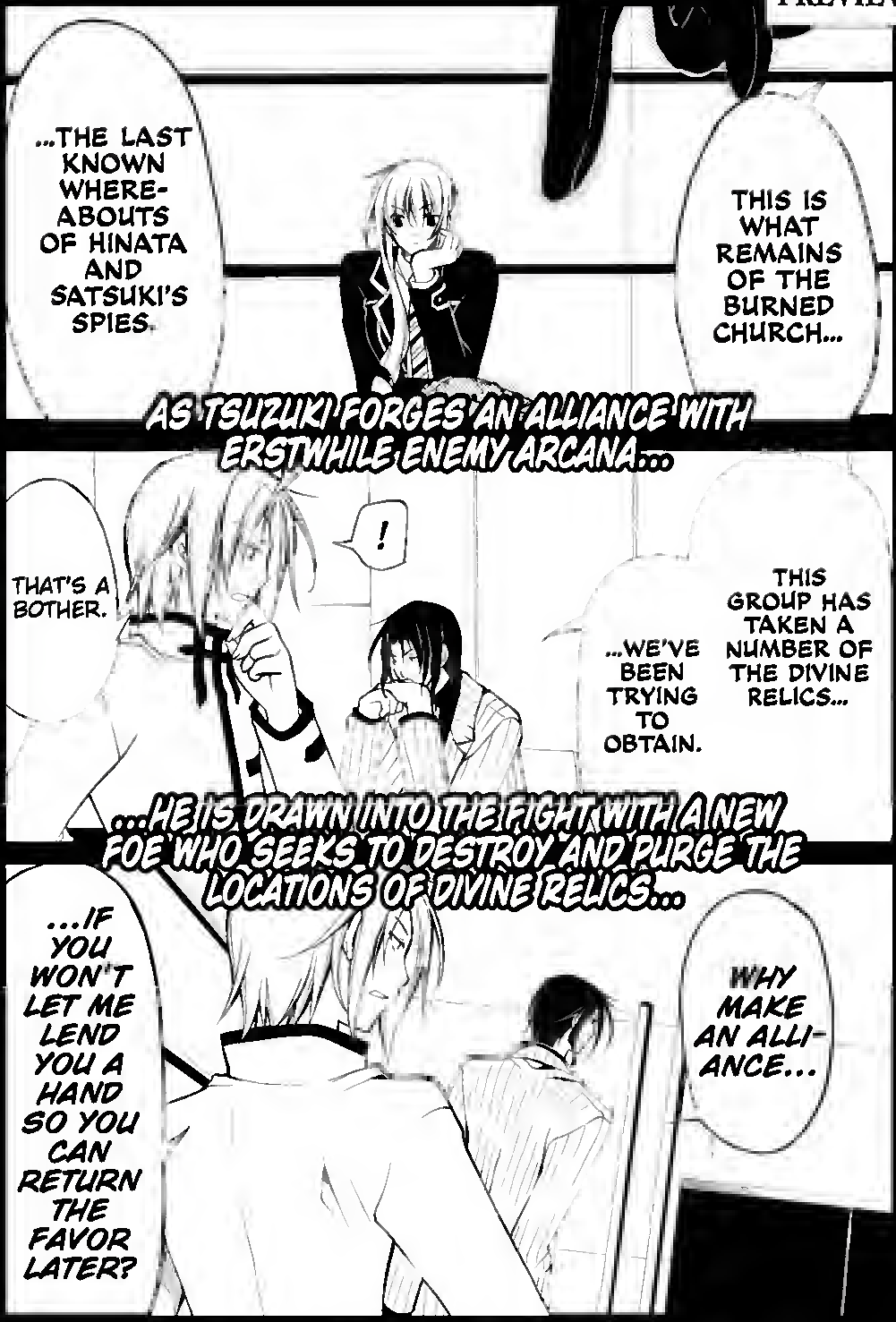
SU (RU)
THIS MARK THAT AP-PEARED ON YOUR CHEST.
DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW?
ISN'T IT...
...THE SUBJECT THAT WEIGHS HEAVIEST ON YOUR MIND?
...YOU...
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY—
KU (GRAB)

I HAVE THE EXACT SAME ONE.
WHA ...!!?

...MY NAME IS TOKIWA.
I EXPECT YOU'VE NOTICED...
...I'M... A FALLEN ANGEL.

STARTING NOW, THESE CRUSADES ARE UNDER MY GOVER-NANCE.
...NICE TO MEET YOU.

PREVIEW


...THE LAST KNOWN WHERE-ABOUTS OF HINATA AND SATSUKI'S SPIES.
THIS IS WHAT REMAINS OF THE BURNED CHURCH...
AS TSUZUKI FORGES AN ALLIANCE WITH ERSTWHILE ENEMY ARCANA...
THAT'S A BOTHER.
!
...WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO OBTAIN.
THIS GROUP HAS TAKEN A NUMBER OF THE DIVINE RELICS...
...HE IS DRAWN INTO THE FIGHT WITH A NEW FOE WHO SEEKS TO DESTROY AND PURGE THE LOCATIONS OF DIVINE RELICS...
...IF YOU WON'T LET ME LEND YOU A HAND SO YOU CAN RETURN THE FAVOR LATER?
WHY MAKE AN ALLI-ANCE...

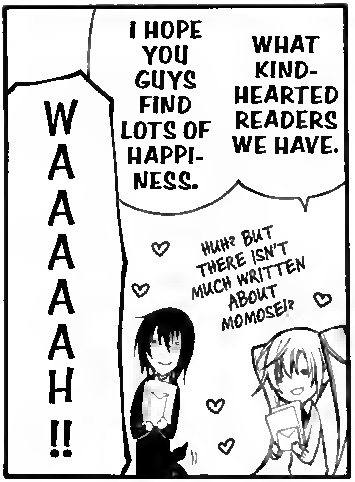
DON'T TELL ME...
...THIS ENTIRE BUILDING IS ARCANA?
...THE KAMUHABURI—"GOD BURIERS"...!!!
...YES, RESISTANCE WOULD BE BOTH FOOLISH AND FUTILE.
I WOULDN'T BOTHER TRYING.

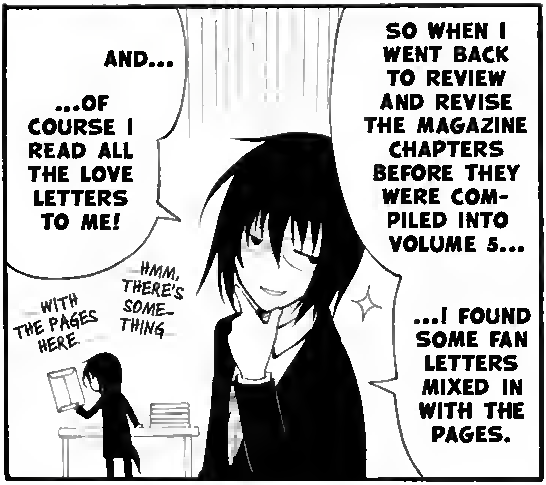
THIS WASN'T IN THE FUTURE I SAW...
THE FUTURE SHIFTED WHEN WE MEDDLED WITH THE LAST CRUSADE.
WHEN ARCANA'S HEADQUARTERS ARE OCCUPIED BY KAMUHABURI...
KIIII (WHEE)
HUH ...?
...WILL TSUZUKI MANAGE TO ESCAPE THIS CRISIS!?
...THE DIVINE RELIC ARCANA HOLDS DEAREST.
TELL ME WHERE YOU'RE HIDING THE CHALICE OF CREATION...
YOU SHOULD CONSIDER TALKING BEFORE I MAKE YOU TALK.

GOGOGO (RUMBLE)
AND WHERE IS THIS "CHALICE OF CREATION" WITH ITS MIRACULOUS POWERS?
WITHIN LIES THE CHALICE. HUH.
ALL THIS FOR ONE MAN'S GAIN
"DO YOU MIND TELLING ME?"
"I WONDERED IF YOU HAVE ANY PLANS FOR TONIGHT.

To be Continued in BLOODY CROSS Vol. 6!!

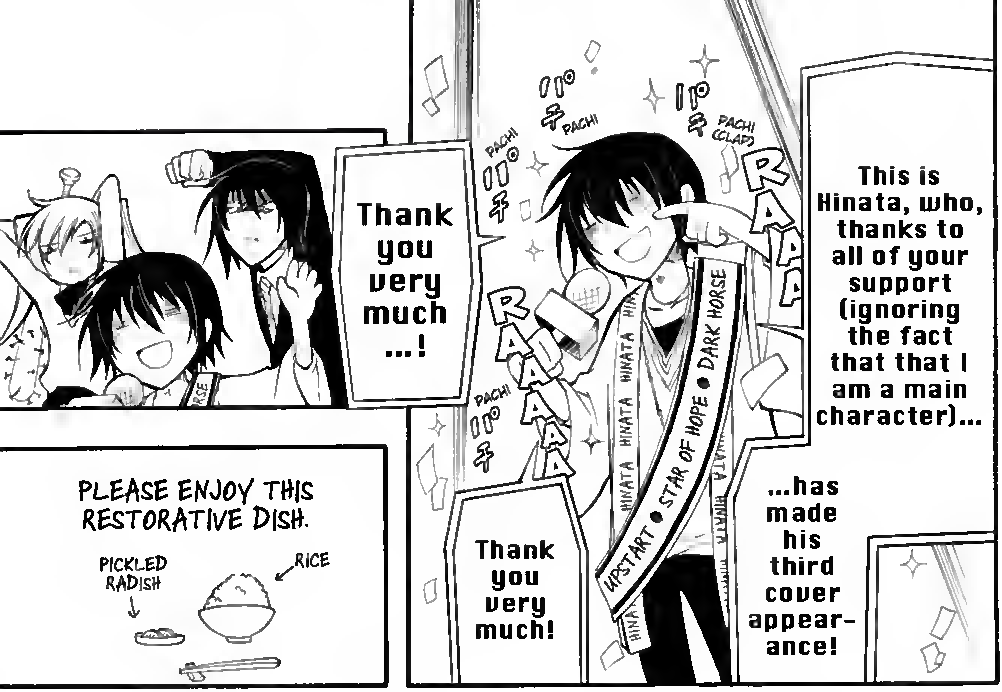
HELLO!
WE'VE FINALLY HIGH-JACKED THE AFTER-WORD—"WE" BEING ME, HANA-MURA...
...AND MO-MOSE!
THE AFTERWORD HAS BECOME A HEALING RETREAT FOR CHARACTERS WHO DON'T GET ENOUGH FACETIME!
AFTER-WORD SCRIBBLES
HOORAY!
WHEE!
KYA!

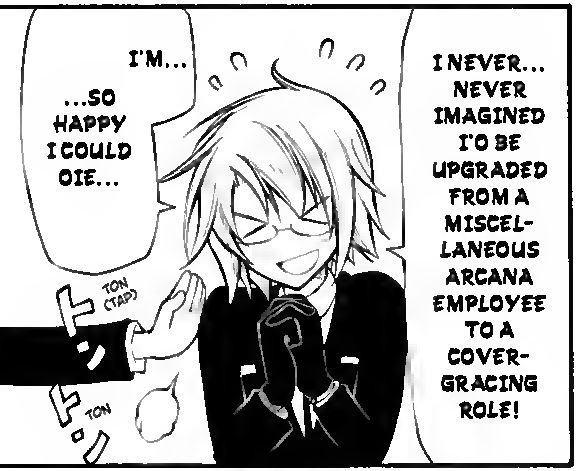

WAAAAAH!!
I HOPE YOU GUYS FIND LOTS OF HAPPI-NESS.
WHAT KIND-HEARTED READERS WE HAVE.
HUH? BUT THERE ISN'T MUCH WRITTEN ABOUT MOMOSE!?

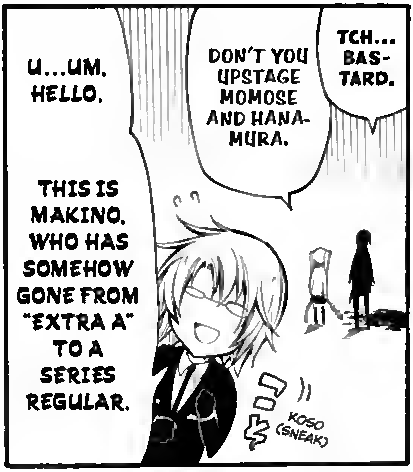

AND...
...OF COURSE I READ ALL THE LOVE LETTERS TO ME!
SO WHEN I WENT BACK TO REVIEW AND REVISE THE MAGAZINE CHAPTERS BEFORE THEY WERE COM-PILED INTO VOLUME 5...
...I FOUND SOME FAN LETTERS MIXED IN WITH THE PAGES.
HMM, THERE'S SOME-THING
WITH THE PAGES HERE

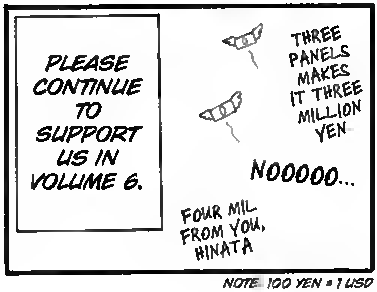
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT!!!
UP TILL NOW, EVERY-ONE'S BEEN WRITING HOW MUCH THEY HATE ME...!!
I LIKE HINATA
BUWA (BLOOSH)
TH... THIS ...
...THIS PERSON SAYS SHE LIKES MEEEE!!

TH...


Thank you very much ...!
PACHI
PACHI (CLAP)
RAAAA
UPSTART ● STAR OF HOPE ● DARK HORSE
HINATA
This is Hinata, who, thanks to all of your support (ignoring the fact that that I am a main character)...
...has made his third cover appearance!
Thank you very much!
PLEASE ENJOY THIS RESTORATIVE DISH.
PICKLED RADISH
RICE


I'M...
...SO HAPPY I COULD DIE...
TON (TAP)
TON
I NEVER... NEVER IMAGINED I'D BE UPGRADED FROM A MISCELLANEOUS ARCANA EMPLOYEE TO A COVER-GRACING ROLE!


U...UM. HELLO.
THIS IS MAKINO. WHO HAS SOMEHOW GONE FROM "EXTRA A" TO A SERIES REGULAR.
DON'T YOU UPSTAGE MOMOSE AND HANAMURA.
TCH... BASTARD.
KOSO (SNEAK)



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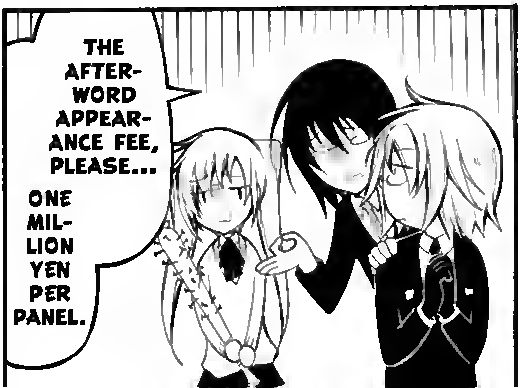

BLOODY CROSS 5

Shiwo Komeyama

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Yen Press
Hachette Book Group
1290 Avenue of the Americas,
New York, NY 10104

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First Yen Press ebook Edition: December 2014

ebook ISBN: 978-0-316-37990-8

App ISBN: 978-0-316-37992-2